

The Punisher

by

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Based on the Marvel Comics Character

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Fade in

EXT. IRAQ -- DAY

The SMALL SCHOOL HOUSE sits at the end of a long dirt road. It is surrounded by sand, scrub, rock and more sand. In the distance, over a small hill a cloud of BLACK SMOKE rises.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

Small boy sits at his desk looking out the window at the black smoke.

Fifteen kids of ages from 8 to 14 sit in a rudimentary classroom. The teacher, MS. RANGER, thirties, American, teaches them math.

O.S. roar of diesel engines approaching. Teaching stops. Everyone looks at each other.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Two heavily armed HUMVEES and an armed FAST ATTACK VEHICLE race up the road and into the school yard.

Before the dust can settle NINE HEAVILY ARMED MEN jump out. Two make for the school house. The others move quickly to set up security at the low wall surrounding the compound.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

O.S. knock knock.

No answer.

O.S. knock knock.

No answer.

O.S. creak as the door is opened.

CAPT. ERICSON, Navy SEAL steps into the now EMPTY ROOM. Ericson is fully kitted out but his weapon is held loosely.

CAPT. ERICSON

Hello? Captain Ericson, United States  
Navy. Looking for Ms. Ranger. Ms.  
Sandra Ranger. We mean you no harm  
ma'am.

Ericson steps further inside. A second man LT. FRANK CASTLE sweeps silently in behind him. Castle is equally kitted out. His weapon is up and ready.

CAPT. ERICSON (CONT'D)

Ms. Ranger I understand you're frightened. We didn't mean to alarm you or your students. It is just that time is critical. We have intelligence that this school is going to be attacked. World Vision requested we evacuate you.

No response.

CAPT. ERICSON (CONT'D)

Ma'am I'd appreciate if you would show yourself so we can evacuate immediately.

Castle moves silently around through the room. He passes the book shelf and the cloak room. He stops before a 5 foot tall picture of the HUMAN SKELETON pasted to the wall. He stares at the skull then with his weapon ready he reaches out and yanks down the picture revealing their hiding place in a cubby hole between the walls. There is a collective gasp as fifteen children and one teacher stare at him with frightened eyes.

Castle lowers his weapon.

CASTLE

Lieutenant Castle. We're here to get you out.

MS. RANGER

I can't leave the children.

Castle is ushering them out of their hiding place.

CAPT. ERICSON

We have vehicles on route to ferry them to safety.

MS. RANGER

You're not listening; I'm not going until I know they are safe.

CAPT. ERICSON

I understand that. Now I need you to gather whatever is absolutely essential and be ready to move.

MS. RANGER

Essential? This is my work. It-.

CASTLE

Will mean nothing if you're dead.

Ms. Ranger takes a deep swallow.

WOLFMAN  
 (on radio)  
 Top, we've got problems.

CAPT. ERICSON  
 Go.

WOLFMAN  
 (on radio)  
 Evac ain't coming.

CAPT. ERICSON  
 Say again.

WOLFMAN  
 (on radio)  
 The Dutch pooched us. Say they won't  
 come. Too hot for them.

CASTLE  
 Not enough room in the Humvees for  
 everyone.

CAPT. ERICSON  
 Damn it.  
 (to Wolfman)  
 Get on the net and get somebody here.

WOLFMAN  
 (on radio)  
 Roger that.

CASTLE  
 (to Ms. Ranger)  
 That bus out there, does it still  
 run?

MS. RANGER  
 Not for about two months.

CAPT. ERICSON  
 (to Castle)  
 See what you can do.

Castle nods. Exits.

CAPT. ERICSON (CONT'D)  
 (into radio)  
 You heard. Top 'em up. Get ready  
 for a fight. Make 'em count because  
 there won't be a resupply.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Castle climbs to the roof where RICH VON BURIAN, twenties,  
 and IRA LEVIN, twenties, have set up their sniper perch.

CASTLE

You heard?

VON BURIAN

Yeah. Sounds like the Alamo.

CASTLE

How does a kraut know about the Alamo?

VON BURIAN

I read.

LEVIN

Just comics.

(to Castle)

So no chance of just grabbing the broad and making a run for it?

CASTLE

None.

Castle's P.O.V larger cloud of dust rising and getting closer.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Wait until they get good and close.  
Take out the drivers first. Fall  
back will be to the school house.

VON BURIAN

Fall back, right. There ain't going  
to be any fall back. Where are you  
going?

Castle climbs down.

CASTLE

To catch a bus.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

Ms. Ranger bustles about trying to calm the children. Ericson  
is fortifying windows.

MS. RANGER

How do you know these people are  
coming here?

CAPT. ERICSON

They have been on the warpath for  
the last four days. Satellite imaging  
shows they have wiped out nearly  
every person in the seven villages  
they have come across. Foreigners  
have been executed on video which  
they have already broadcast.

MS. RANGER

Yes but how do you know they are coming here? Maybe they'll go around us.

CAPT. ERICSON

Because you are in a direct line with the regional capital.

MS. RANGER

What are you saying?

CAPT. ERICSON

You're in their way.

MS. RANGER

But can't someone stop them? Negotiate? Something?

CAPT. ERICSON

They have slaughtered nearly 500 people. Their own people. I'm a soldier, not a politician but I don't think there is much to negotiate. Nothing is going to stop them.

MS. RANGER

So what are we supposed to do?

CAPT. ERICSON

Survive.

Ms. Ranger opens her mouth but is cut off as a MORTAR detonates in the school yard shaking the building.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

TOM HOLLOWAY drives one of the Humvees pushing the ancient bus while Castle steers it into the gate sealing it. Another mortar detonates.

Castle kicks open the back door, jumping out.

TOM HOLLOWAY hustles up to him. More mortars hit.

HOLLOWAY

(yelling)

Just wondering Lieutenant, how the hell are we supposed to get out of here now?

Castle drops to the ground crawling beneath the bus.

CASTLE

(over his shoulder)

Not that way. Claymore.

Holloway shakes his head and rushes back to his position.

EXT. AROUND THE SCHOOL

The MILITANTS race towards the school house riding in flat-bed trucks crammed with gunmen and technicals (pick-ups mounted with heavy weapons).

Sporadic bullets whip through the school yard kicking up clouds of dust. Mortars and RPGs land everywhere.

The SEALs wait until the militants are within range before opening fire with the snipers hitting the drivers. Two vehicles lose control and flip, spilling their occupants. Their precision shooting forces the militants to halt their advance. The gunfire increases into a continuous assault.

Using the confusion a group of ten make their way to the compound wall.

Dropping to the ground they crawl under the bus. One man motions to the others to hurry. Turns back - click.

Man's POV rock falls revealing a CLAYMORE MINE with the words FRONT TOWARDS ENEMY facing him.

BOOM!!! The mine detonates wiping out half their number.

Dazed the remainder fall back and commence pounding the compound with their heavy weapons. The barrage is unrelenting.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

Ms. Ranger and the frightened children huddle on the floor under their benches as the building shudders.

CAPT. ERICSON

Get them back into that shelter.  
Try to get them under something in  
case the roof collapses.

MS. RANGER

But-.

CAPT. ERICSON

Do what I say ma'am. And stay there.

Exits.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Ericson runs through a storm of bullets to get to a Humvee sprouting long whip antennas.

CAPT. ERICSON

Wolf you gotta get us something.

Wolfmann sits before a heavy duty radio. He hands a handset to Ericson.

WOLFMAN

(yelling)

Tusker One-four. Unit of four Canadian LAVs. About six clicks West of our position.

CAPT. ERICSON

(into radio)

Tusker One-four this is X-ray Zero-three.

TUSKER LEADER

(on radio)

Copy. Sounds like you're in the shit.

CAPT. ERICSON

Affirmative. I have fifteen non-coms requiring evac. We are taking mortar, RPG and small arms fire.

TUSKER LEADER

Copy that. Heading your way double quick. Hang in there.

CAPT. ERICSON

Much obliged.  
(to Wolfman)  
Damn.

WOLFMAN

What?

CAPT. ERICSON

This is going to be too close.

WOLFMAN

I've got the arty battery at Didu on the horn.

All around them the attack intensifies.

CAPT. ERICSON

Gimme the mic.

WOLFMAN

You're holding it. Arty call sign Bravo Fox-trot Gun One-six.

CAPT. ERICSON

BFG One-six this is X-ray Zero-three. We are pinned down by rocket and mortar.

(MORE)



CAPT. ERICSON (CONT'D)

We have fifteen non-coms requiring  
evac and our ride is late. Requesting  
bullets at grid seven-six-nine.  
Danger close.

BFG

Copy X-ray Zero-three. Confirm your  
last.

CAPT. ERICSON

Grid seven-six-nine. Danger close!

BFG

Copy. Grid seven-six-nine. Fire  
for effect.

CAPT. ERICSON

Much obliged.  
(into team radio)  
Incoming! Heads down!  
(to Wolfman)  
Time to go.

They rush into the school house.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

The soldiers hunker behind whatever cover they can find as  
the bombardment continues. As they wait the militants begin  
to move forward. And they wait. And wait.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

WOLFMAN

(to Ericson)  
They canceled the fire mission.

CAPT. ERICSON

(on team radio)  
Get back on the wall!  
(to Wolfman)  
What is going on? We are about to  
be overrun! We need arty now! Right  
now!

WOLFMAN

Arty says JAG lawyers won't authorize  
danger close. Too risky for civs.

CAPT. ERICSON

Danger close is all that's going to  
save us now.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Castle moves along the wall firing. He reaches Holloway.

CASTLE

You good?

HOLLOWAY

We're getting smoked out here.

CASTLE

They get inside the wall they're all dead. Hold your position.

HOLLOWAY

Check on Sanchez. I think he took one already. He's been firing one handed for the last few minutes.

Castle spots Sanchez firing with one hand while his other arm hangs at his side covered in blood.

Castle rushes through the open towards Sanchez.

Three large explosions detonate at the side wall of the compound opening a large hole. Castle is knocked to the ground.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

Ericson and Wolfman have also been knocked to the ground.

LEVIN

(on radio)

Sir, they've breached the East wall!  
They're flanking us!

CAPT. ERICSON

Plug that hole! Get Von Burian over to help you.

LEVIN

(on radio, voice  
getting weak)

Von Burian's down. I can't get an angle on...

Ericson moves to the window facing the large gap. Beyond it a technical moves into view.

CAPT. ERICSON

Where's Castle?

WOLFMAN

Last I saw he was at the South wall.

CAPT. ERICSON

(on radio)

Castle! They've breached the outer wall. Technical trying to make entry! Castle?!

O.S. sound of a diesel engine cranking up.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Spewing dirt and dust one of the Humvees races across the school yard towards the gap. Engine roaring Castle slams into the technical head on ramming it backwards and plugging the gap.

In a frenzy the militants open fire on the Humvee.

Suddenly the door kicks open and Castle comes out firing. One militant lines up an RPG but Castle gets him first. The rocket slams into the wall a few feet away. Castle disappears in a cloud of dirt and debris.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

WOLFMAN

Castle's down!

CAPT. ERICSON

Stand fast! You can't help him now.  
Castle made a choke point.

(on radio)

Holloway, Dom, Crunch, Sanchez?  
Anyone copy?

HOLLOWAY

(on radio)

Dom is down. Sanchez is still moving  
but that last rocket scrambled him.  
I can try and get to him.

CAPT. ERICSON

No. Hold your position. Crunch?

CRUNCH

(weak)

Sorry LT, took a round to the leg.  
Trying to get it tied off. Be there  
asap.

CAPT. ERICSON

Damn it!

(to Wolfman)

Get me BFG.

(hands him mic)

BFG, this is X-ray Zero-three. We  
are being overrun! No time. We  
need arty now! Repeat, being overrun.  
Men down. We need immediate fire  
mission my last!

BFG

(on radio)

X-ray Zero-three negative. JAG still denying fire mission. Looking for fast movers in the area.

TUSKER LEADER

(on radio)

This is Tusker Leader, BFG tell that JAG idiot the bandits are surrounding them! They need arty now! X-ray Zero-three we are coming. Almost in range. We are coming! Hold on!

CAPT. ERICSON

Copy Tusker Leader.

(to Wolfman)

We aren't going to make it.

Wolfman takes his weapon and moves to the window.

Two RPGs slam into the school house blasting out a huge chunk of the wall. The children scream. Ericson is down, covered by debris. Wolfman struggles to get off the ground. Through the hole he sees militants swarming towards the Humvee.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

The militants rush forward confident as no one is returning their fire. The Humvee creaks. Slowly, trailing smoke Castle pulls himself through the turret. He is bloodied and torn. But with a murderous look he grabs the .50 caliber machine gun, yanks back the cocking handle.

The .50 thunders as Castle unleashes a deadly stream of bullets. At that range the militants are blasted to vapor. Castle continues to fire as they flee. The heavy bullets chew through a technical that makes a charge turning it into smoking scrap.

When the .50 runs dry he yanks the SAW machine gun from its mount and jumps down. He chases the still fleeing militants. Another technical attacks but Castle unleashes a stream of bullets cutting it to pieces and continues firing until the gas tank erupts in a fireball.

When the SAW runs dry Castle grabs another weapon and keeps firing. The militants dive for cover behind their vehicles. One finds his courage and rushes Castle firing wildly until his weapon empties. Undaunted he draws a machete. Castle's weapon has emptied as well. As the man approaches Castle whips his gun at the man hitting him in the head. Before the man falls Castle is on him and snaps his neck. Another militant rushes in but Castle slices him nearly in half with the machete. More try to advance but Castle has rearmed and opens fire. When that weapon empties he grabs another and another. Militants flee his onslaught of his attack.

Castle is unstoppable. The pitiful few militants fall back to a smoldering truck.

Whump! Whump! Whump! Suddenly the ground around the militants erupts.

The Canadians have made it and have unleashed the cannons on their LAVs. In moments the militants are decimated, their vehicles destroyed and barely a handful of survivors.

With the LAVs mopping up, Tusker Leader rolls up to the lone figure on the battlefield.

TUSKER LEADER

Major Stephen Gallagher. You X-ray  
Zero-three?

But Castle doesn't seem to hear. He glares at the smoldering battlefield and the fleeing militants, his bloodied face a war-mask of pure hatred.

TUSKER LEADER (CONT'D)

Soldier, you okay?

Castle turns and glares at him. A weapon is still gripped in his hand. Gallagher recognizes the look. He reaches for his WEAPON CONTROL.

TUSKER LEADER (CONT'D)

Easy there. We're on your side.

Slowly Castle's features relax. The weapon is lowered.

CASTLE

(voice hoarse)

We've got non-coms and wounded that  
require evac.

TUSKER LEADER

We'll get them.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD -- LATER

The area is still thick with smoke. The children have been loaded into the LAVs. The Canadian medics move quickly amongst the wounded SEALs while Castle stands guard. He is the last one to be patched up.

CAPT. ERICSON

Time to load up.

CASTLE

(nods)

How are they?

CAPT. ERICSON

Kids are scared out of their minds  
but otherwise fine. Crunch took one  
through the thigh. Sanchez and Levin  
are full of shrapnel. Von Burian  
broke his ankle. Everyone got hit.  
But they'll all make it.

CASTLE

Good.

They get into the LAV. Castle notices a Canadian using a  
marker and a stencil to make a SKULL on the wall of the LAV.

CAPT. ERICSON

What's that?

CANADIAN SOLDIER

Score card for any vehicles we take  
out.

Castle stares at the skull for a moment.

WOLFMAN

It's kind of funny sir.

CAPT. ERICSON

How could you find anything funny  
about this?

WOLFMAN

Remember when you told that lady  
there wasn't anything that could  
stop these guys?

CAPT. ERICSON

Yeah?

WOLFMAN

They never met Frank Castle.

They laugh. Castle smiles grimly.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR U.S. -- DAY

Returning soldiers stream into the hangar to be met by family  
and loved ones.

Castle moves through the crowd until he spots his wife MARIA,  
daughter LISA (eleven) and FRANK Jr (eight). They have  
dressed up for the occasion and Frank Jr holds a hand painted  
sign saying 'Welcome Home Dad.'

Tears in her eyes Maria rushes to him with the kids. Beaming  
Castle grabs them all in a bear hug. She seems surprised  
that he doesn't want to let go. Finally he does.

MARIA

Welcome home.

CASTLE

It's so good to see you guys. I've missed you so much.

FRANK JR

I made you a sign.

CASTLE

It's so good that I could see it all the way across the room!

Hugs them again.

LISA

(coolly)

So how long are you home for?

CASTLE

For good.

Surprised look on Maria. He looks her in the eye and nods.

FRANK JR

Really? Forever?

CASTLE

Forever. Lets get out of here.

Castle puts Frank Jr. on his shoulders and an arm around Maria and Lisa as they walk out.

INT. CASTLE HOME -- NIGHT

Castle sleeps restlessly. Wakes with a start. Looks around confused. Reaches out and gently touches Maria. Relieved, he gets out of bed.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - LATER

Castle stands silently watching his children sleep. Maria steps up behind him.

MARIA

You okay?

CASTLE

Just wanted to see them again. They've both grown so much.

MARIA

It happens fast. Sorry about the mess.

CASTLE

It's fine. This is our home. No one's coming for inspection. Besides a little mess gives it that lived in look.

MARIA

Yeah but just a little mess.

Castle smiles.

MARIA (CONT'D)

So you really aren't going to re-up?

CASTLE

No. The Corps has been great to me but it's time to move on. I've already submitted my paperwork. Lieutenant Ericson gave my name to Jerry Albert. He's recruiting for Tactical Solutions.

MARIA

You're going to be a contractor? Aren't you just trading one uniform for another?

CASTLE

No, I'm going to be instructing. Here, stateside.

MARIA

For sure?

CASTLE

Yeah. No more ops.  
(beat)  
I just can't do it anymore.

MARIA

Do what?

Beat.

CASTLE

One of our last operations was to evacuate a school house. These militants tearing across the desert laying waste to anyone in front of them. The school, those children, were in their path. Nothing was stopping them. We knew what they were going to do to them. And...

MARIA

Frank?



CASTLE

I scared myself Maria. Something inside me, like some kind of monster was set loose. All I wanted to do was smash and destroy them.

Beat.

MARIA

But it's war. And you were protecting the innocents.

CASTLE

What scared me was that, dear God, I didn't want it to end. Killing them wasn't good enough. They were so evil, I wanted to chase them forever to make them pay.

MARIA

You didn't...?

CASTLE

No, when the battle ended, whatever was inside of me went quiet.

MARIA

Okay.

CASTLE

It's silent. But I'm worried it's still in there.

MARIA

You're a Marine, a SEAL. Your job is to fight, to take the fight to our enemies. To protect us. You can't be ashamed of what you are.

CASTLE

It just scares me knowing what's inside of me.

MARIA

(takes his face in  
her hands)

You're home now. With us. Safe. Now it's our turn to protect you from monsters. It will take time but that monster will go away for good.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

LISA

Stop it Frank! I've got it!

FRANK JR  
But I want a turn!

The kids move down the hallway, Lisa carrying a video camera.  
Frank Jr. trying to grab it.

LISA  
You'll get a turn after.

MARIA (O.S.)  
What are you two doing?

LISA/FRANK JR  
Nothing!

MARIA (O.S.)  
Leave dad alone. This is his first  
chance to sleep in.

LISA  
We aren't...

They stop at the bedroom doorway which is open a crack.

LISA (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
You open the door.

FRANK JR  
(whisper)  
Why me?

LISA  
Because I've got the camera.

Frank Jr pushes the door. They approach the bed where Castle  
lies sleeping.

LISA (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
On three. One, two-.

CASTLE  
BOO!

Castle whips off the blankets grabbing him children in a  
tight bear hug before throwing them onto the bed. The kids  
squeal from the surprise and in delight.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Tickle war!!

He begins to tickle them and their squeals and laughter rise  
higher and higher.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Lisa fiddling with her camera as she sits at the table.

Frank Jr is busy drawing a picture.

Castle enters.

CASTLE

(to Frank Jr)

Hey fella, what are you drawing?

Frank Jr beams with pride as he shows the crayon drawing.

FRANK JR

It's you at work as a soldier. See there's you. That's your helmet. Mom said I'm too young to draw guns right now.

CASTLE

And she's right.

FRANK JR

But I like drawing you as a soldier.

Maria enters and stands by Castle, wrapping an arm around him.

LISA

He's a Marine. That's why he always has to go away.

CASTLE

(smiles)

You're half right. I am still a Marine. But like I said yesterday, I'm not going away anymore.

FRANK JR

Did you get fired?

CASTLE

(laughs)

No, I have another job. I'm going to be teaching.

FRANK JR

Teaching soldiers how to fight?

CASTLE

Teaching them to stay alive I hope.

LISA

So no more going away?

CASTLE

No. No more going away. Although I was thinking about going into the city today. Anyone want to go to the park?

Both Lisa and Frank Jr burst out of their chairs rushing to give him a hug.

INT. CASTLE'S SUV -- LATER

MONTAGE images of them driving, singing songs, Frank Jr asleep in his seat.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK, THE SHEEP MEADOW -- LATER

They walk through the park finding a spot and setting up a picnic.

We see Castle and his kids playing Frisbee, trying to fly a kite.

EXT. PARK -- LATER

The kids kick the soccer ball. Castle and Maria sit and watch. The VIDEO CAMERA is mounted on a tripod.

CASTLE

Damn. Those kids can kick a ball.

MARIA

They've been practicing in the backyard. Lisa wants to try out for the all star team. Frank plays all the time at school. Any chance he gets.

CASTLE

What's with the camera?

MARIA

Lisa's been video taping herself. Her coach uses it to improve her technique.

CASTLE

Sounds like a pervert.

FRANK JR

Dad! Look at that!

Frank Jr. points to the sky. Castle looks up to see a KITE. It is BLACK with a WHITE SKULL on it.

LISA

That's creepy.

FRANK JR  
No it's not! It cool!

MARIA  
I think it's kind of spooky.

Castle stares at it for an extra moment, lost in a trance, before shaking his head looking away.

Lisa drop kicks the ball and it sails away into the bushes.

FRANK JR  
Mom! Lisa kicked the ball away again!

LISA  
Did not!

MARIA  
You two. Where is it?

LISA  
It's in the bushes.

CASTLE  
I'll go.

MARIA  
You've spent enough time traipsing through the bush. I'll go.  
(Castle laughs)  
C'mon you two, help me find this thing.

Maria and the two kids head for the trees then move deeper.

CASTLE  
(muttering)  
Going to have to call in search and rescue-.

O.S. POP POP of **GUNFIRE!**

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
What the hell!!

Castle is already on his feet racing for the bushes.

O.S more gunfire.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
MARIA!!

Castle plunges into the bushes.

O.S rapid gunfire-.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Castle jerks awake in bed in a dark room. His breathing is rapid, sweat covers him. He doesn't notice. He is just glad that the nightmare is over.

He reaches out for Maria beside him. His hand touches a BED RAIL.

Looking around he frowns. The room isn't familiar. Oxygen tubing in his nose, softly beeping cardiac monitor. Notices a IV in his arm. **MORPHINE** is written on the bag. Notices the BANDAGES on his chest.

Confused, he tries to move but can't. His body feels so heavy. The drug pulls him back to sleep...

DREAM SEQUENCE

Happy times with the family. Lots of hugs and smiles. Playing tickle games. Snowball fights in winter. Splashing in kiddy pool. Walking on the beach with Maria while the kids play in the surf.

KIDS VOICES (O.S.)  
(happy, playful)  
Daddy! Daddy!

Switch to; a path heading towards a PLAYGROUND.

KIDS VOICES (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Daddy look! I want to go on the  
swing first!

O.S. pop pop pop.

KIDS VOICES (CONT'D)  
Daddy what's-?

The playground morphs into a battle field. Dust and smoke are everywhere. Bullets zing close overhead.

KIDS VOICES (CONT'D)  
(panicked, scared,  
pleading)  
Daddee! Daddee!

HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER

Castle lies in his bed, eyes closed. He looks like hell, scruffy beard, circles under his eyes.

He rouses slowly, painfully to see, **DOCTOR WILKES** standing at the end of his bed.

DOCTOR WILKES

Good morning Mr. Castle. I just want to check your wounds before we discuss your condition.

CASTLE

Where's my family?

Castle is still groggy as the doctor makes a quick inspection of his wounds and the chest tube.

DOCTOR WILKES

I think we'll be taking out that tube today. Chest x-ray shows that your lung is re-inflated-.

CASTLE

(terse)

My family!

(softens)

...please...

Doctor Wilkes nods somberly and steps to the door. Opens it. FATHER ANGELO, early fifties, steps inside.

Castle gasps as if punched in the stomach.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

(choking up)

Oh...no. Please...

Father Angelo cannot look at him.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Please not... My family...

FATHER ANGELO

I'm so sorry Frank.

Castle grinds his fists into his forehead trying to drive out the pain.

The ROAR starts deep within him. It is animal, primal, a mix of pain, anger and rage.

Father Angelo grabs Castle holding tight as his body shudders.

CASTLE

(pleading)

I have to be with them...

FATHER ANGELO

They are with God now.

HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER.

Castle sits in the darkened room staring at a picture of his family. He looks awful.

The door opens. DETECTIVE BRIAN FEIST, thirties, pokes his head in.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
I'm Detective Brian Feist. This is  
Detective Stan Lacefield. I'm  
wondering if we could speak with  
you?

Castle nods. DETECTIVE STAN LACEFIELD, late sixties, follows. He nods at Castle.

Castle looks back at the picture.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
Firstly let me extend my most sincere  
condolences and please know that the  
NYPD is doing everything possible to  
bring these people to justice.

CASTLE  
Where is the investigation at?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
We recovered your video camera at  
the scene. It was still recording -  
at the time of - well - it captured  
images of individuals fleeing the  
scene. I'm hoping that you would be  
able to make a positive  
identification. I have some mug  
shots for you to look through if you  
feel up to it.

CASTLE  
The video, I want it back.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Well - um right now it's evidence.  
(beat)  
I'll see what I can do.

CASTLE  
Good. Now show me the pictures.

HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Castle is hard at work looking through mug-shots on Feist's lap-top. Lacefield stands against the wall watching Castle.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Would you like to take a break?



CASTLE

(not looking up)

No.

(points)

Here's another one. He's the last one.

Feist and Lacefield look at the screen. Exchange a look. Lacefield goes back to stand against the wall.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

I've done what you asked. Now I want to know what happened. I want to know why we went to the park and ended up in a fire-fight.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You don't-.

(points to the laptop)

This is Johnny Canselli of the Canselli crime family. He works as an enforcer for his father, Isadore. Our guys in Organized Crime heard he was pushing for a seat with the big boys. Isadore is getting old and Johnny wants the job. Problem is the other bosses don't see him as management material.

CASTLE

(terse)

How do we fit in?

DETECTIVE FEIST

It appears Johnny and his 'soldiers,' the others you've identified, met up with this guy.

(shuffles through images)

Philip Kingston.

CASTLE

What's so special about him?

DETECTIVE FEIST

(looks at Lacefield)

He's an accountant working for the Canselli family. The men with him who were killed were his security. For whatever reason both sides started shooting...

CASTLE

...with us in the middle of it.

Castle looks down at the picture of his family.

DETECTIVE FEIST

I'm very sorry for what happened.  
But I have to tell you that your  
identifications are a major break.  
It's going to take time but we'll  
get them. I promise.

CASTLE

Don't make promises.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Why not?

CASTLE

I promised my kids I'd keep them  
safe.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CASTLE'S ROOM -- LATER

The detectives walk down the hall.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You were surprisingly quiet in there.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

We've never been able to do any  
serious harm to Canselli. He hides  
behind an entire football team of  
lawyers and pays off or threatens  
whoever he has to to get out of  
prosecution.

DETECTIVE FEIST

But we've got Johnny on video. Plus  
eyewitness testimony. It's almost a  
slam dunk.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Exactly. That's making me think we  
might actually win one this time.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CANCELLI'S HOUSE -- DAY

LAMP sails across the room exploding against the wall.

ISADORE

(roaring)

What the fuck were you thinking!

**ISADORE**, late sixties, is a bear of a man. Looks like he  
could still take care of himself in a fight.

JOHNNY

You weren't around so I was taking  
care of business. Christ, I thought  
you'd be happy.

**JOHNNY**, late twenties, thick neck, pug face, tattoos.  
Permanent chip on his shoulder.

ISADORE

You **THOUGHT**? You didn't **think**.  
'Cause if you did I wouldn't have  
had to fly back from the Caymans to  
fix your God-damn mess. Again! I  
never told you or anyone to off  
Kingston.

JOHNNY

He was skimming from us.

ISADORE

So you take him out inna park? In  
broad daylight? He's an ACCOUNTANT  
for Christsake! What's he going to  
do? Throw his calculator at you?

JOHNNY

He had muscle.

ISADORE

Two meatheads.

JOHNNY

We were just going to talk with him.  
It wasn't our fault. They started  
blasting.

ISADORE

Oh stop it. You sound like a five  
year old.

JOHNNY

I don't get what you're so upset  
about.

ISADORE

I'm upset because I'm cleaning up  
your mess. I gotta pay for your  
alibi. I gotta lean on the judges  
and the cops we own. I gotta do  
it!! Maybe I should let them take  
your ass to jail. Might do you some  
good.

JOHNNY

Whoa pop, c'mon. I know you ain't  
happy but...

ISADORE

But what?

Johnny is at a loss.

ROSALITA

But we will do nothing of the sort.

**ROSALITA**, early sixties, heavy make-up but fierce eyes, steps into the room.

ISADORE

Stay outta this. This ain't your business.

ROSALITA

There is no way he is going to spend one second in any kind of jail. I don't care what he did. He's my son and I will not have him in handcuffs like a common criminal.

ISADORE

He shot a guy in broad daylight! An' if that ain't bad enough, him and his idiots waste an entire family! The cops, the newspapers, everyone is screaming for blood.

ROSALITA

Let them have it. Just so long as it isn't my sons.

The icy glare ends the conversation.

ISADORE

(throws up his hands)  
Jesus Christ!

INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny and Rosalita enter. VINNIE, late twenties, burly, sits at the kitchen with cookies and a glass of milk.

JOHNNY

Why don't you just help yourself?

ROSALITA

Johnny, don't talk like that. Vinnie, do you want something else to eat?

VINNIE

No Mrs. Canselli, thank you.

ROSALITA

Are you boys going out to the strip club tonight?

JOHNNY

Ma!

ROSALITA  
All right. All right. Sorry, the  
'dance hall.' Just behave.

VINNIE  
Yes ma'am.

Rosalita leaves.

VINNIE (CONT'D)  
I wish she was my mom.

JOHNNY  
You can have her.

VINNIE  
You sure? Sounded like she was the  
only thing keeping your old man from  
ripping your head off.

JOHNNY  
Old fuck. You should have seen him.  
I thought he was going to have a  
heart attack.

VINNIE  
He might if he finds out what we got  
running with MDK.

JOHNNY  
He won't. We got rid of Kingston.  
As far as anyone's concerned he was  
skimming. They look at the books  
and notice some missing cash we just  
pin it on him. Nobody's looking at  
us.

VINNIE  
Sounds too easy.

JOHNNY  
It is. The old man tried to do  
everything himself. My way, they do  
the work and we get the profits.  
It's the way this business should be  
run.

VINNIE  
Except we gotta put business on hold  
because the heat is on.

JOHNNY  
So what? Let MDK hold the junk for  
a bit. As soon as it clears we're  
in business.

VINNIE

That's a million bucks in dope they're sitting on. They lose that and you lose your old man's money.

JOHNNY

Ain't going to happen. Trust me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CANCELLI'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Isadore is still fuming. NICHOLAS, fifties, steps into the room. Nicholas is Isadore's body-guard.

NICHOLAS

You wanted to see me boss?

ISADORE

Yeah I did. You heard what my idiot kid did?

(nod)

And for what?

NICHOLAS

Not my place to say.

ISADORE

I'm saying there's something else going on here. Take a look at the books. See how much Kingston was stealing from us.

NICHOLAS

You believe Johnny?

ISADORE

Maybe. I've just never seen him show this much initiative. It worries me.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - LATER

No lights are on but the sun streams in.

Castle shuffles inside. He is still ragged, his clothes hang off him.

Everything is the way it was when they left almost two months ago. Kids shoes are piled behind the door. Dishes are in the dish rack waiting to be put away, toys are scattered on the floor. Frank Jr's drawings sit on the table surrounded by crayons.

The home is a portrait of a life interrupted.

INT.CASTLE'S HOUSE - LATER

Castle sits alone at the kitchen table, surrounded by empty chairs, a sandwich and glass of milk in front of him barely touched.

The drawings haven't been touched.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Castle sits on the couch staring at but not seeing the television before him.

He has made a half hearted attempt to get through the mail.

The television drones on.

Phones rings.

CASTLE

Hello.

CALLER

(on phone)

Hi there. Can I speak with Mrs. Castle please?

CASTLE

She's...unavailable.

CALLER

(on phone)

All right. This is the American Red Cross. I just wanted to remind her of her appointment to donate blood this weekend. It's at St. Augustus church.

CASTLE

Thank you.

Hangs up.

BEDROOM - NIGHT

The house is exceptionally quiet. O.S. street noise filters in.

Castle lies awake on the bed. The other side is untouched. He reaches out towards her pillow. Rolling over he sees Maria sleeping peacefully beside him.

With a start he realizes he dozed off. The bed is empty.

HALLWAY

Castle walks quietly through the darkened house. He stops outside of his children's rooms.

The rooms are untouched, silently awaiting their return. Toys, clothes, soccer gear in Lisa's room and drawings in Frank Jr's cover the desks and beds.

The basket of folded laundry sits on the floor waiting to be put away.

Closet door is open, darkness beyond. Can't see the monsters in there.

Castle turns away.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The sun is bright. Birds sing. A gentle breeze rustles the branches.

Castle parks his truck. Still looks like hell. Unshaven, dark circles under his eyes, exhausted from lack of sleep.

Walks slowly to the grave-site. The **TOMBSTONE** has the names of his wife and children etched in it. The grass has yet to take root.

Castle kneels. Digs his hands deep into the dirt. He weeps.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Castle lies curled on the ground next to the grave-site, taking his place with his family.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Small knock at the door.

Castle answers to find SAMANTHA (eleven) at the door.

SAMANTHA

Hi Mr. Castle. Is Lisa around?

B.G. Samantha's mom, ELAINE, rushes along the sidewalk towards them.

CASTLE

Uh no, Sam, she's isn't.

SAMANTHA

Oh. We just got home from our trip to Italy. It was great. I got her a present and wanted to give it to her.

Samantha's mom rushes up the driveway, a worried look on her face.



ELAINE

Samantha I need you to come home  
right now.

SAMANTHA

I'm just giving Lisa her gift.

ELAINE

You need to come home, now.

SAMANTHA

But mom-.

Elaine takes her by the shoulder. She is verging on tears.

ELAINE

(to Castle)

I'm so sorry. We've been away. We  
just found out.

(choking back tears)

I am so sorry.

Castle can only nod. Elaine bustles Samantha away.

SAMANTHA

(to Elaine)

Sorry? Sorry for what? What  
happened?

Castle goes back inside.

O.S. Samantha starts wailing.

INT. ST. JUDE'S PARISH - DAY

Castle sits at the back listening as the priest goes through  
the mass.

Robotically Castle follows the others. Stands when they do,  
sits when they do, makes the sign of the cross when they do.

He sees a young couple move close to each other. Casually  
she slips her hand into his.

Further down two children sit on the kneeler drawing.

An old couple, both stooped by age, stand together. The man  
gently helps her to stand and sit.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S PARISH - DAY

Father Angelo greets parishioners. Castle drifts through  
the crowd. Father Angelo moves to intercept him.

FATHER ANGELO

Frank! Glad to see you here.

CASTLE

Old habits...

FATHER ANGELO

Good habits. I'm sorry I couldn't meet you at the hospital when they released you. There was a baptism-.

CASTLE

It's okay. Thank you for taking care of them...

FATHER ANGELO

Please understand that you were still in a coma. We tried to wait as long as we could.

CASTLE

I understand. It had to be done. The marker is - is - it's nice.

He steps away.

FATHER ANGELO

Frank, do you want to talk? I mean, is there anything you need?

Beat.

CASTLE

What I really want, no one can give me.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Castle sits at the table. Nothing has been touched.

O.S. knock at the door.

FRONT DOOR

Castle opens the door to find Detective Feist standing there wearing a raid jacket with POLICE emblazoned across the back.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Wanted to tell you first, we started making arrests.

CASTLE

Good.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Thanks to your identifications we were able to secure warrants for a number of residences including Johnny Canselli's.

CASTLE

And?

DETECTIVE FEIST

They will be arraigned and formally charged in the next day or so. We were hoping to find the weapons they used but they were still searching when I left.

CASTLE

Is that going to be a problem?

DETECTIVE FEIST

The weapons would be icing on the cake. Without them we are going to have to try for a confession. Barring that we go with what we have and take it to the grand jury.

CASTLE

Thank you.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Castle stands staring out the window. The bed behind him is messed up. He can't sleep again.

He holds SOMETHING tight to his chest.

GLASS clinks.

Castle snaps out of it. Looks down to see the remnants of a picture frame fall away. He crushed it against his chest. He is left with their picture.

INSERT Graphic 'Eleven Months Later'

INT. GYMNASIUM -- DAY

The place is dark, like the inside of a garage. The clientele is all male. This isn't a fitness center. Sweat is everywhere along with the clanging of heavy steel plates.

Castle is covered in sweat as he lies on a bench pressing up an impressive weight.

Finishing he adds more then get back under the bar. Around him others take notice of the weight. He finishes and adds more. He is getting into the 'this isn't healthy' range. But he presses out a half dozen reps of well over two hundred pounds and then adds more.

Two other weight lifters take notice and move close...just in case. Castle is pushing close to three hundred pounds.

Veins explode on his arms and across his forehead as he pushes through the first reps. But then his muscles fatigue and he struggles barely getting his arms extended. Everyone expects him to drop it on the rack. But he lowers the bar to his chest. His arms shake as he presses the bar up. It slows, almost stopping. The weight lifters step up to spot him-.

CASTLE

(growling)

NO.

They keep their hands off as Castle strains, inch by inch until he gets the weight up before slamming it into the rack.

WEIGHTLIFTER

Damn man, you trying to kill yourself?

Castle watches the sweat drip off his face, pooling on the floor.

INT. GYMNASIUM -- LATER

Castle pounds on the heavy bag, punch after punch. He throws knees then kicks. Each blow hits with all the force he has. He sets a furious pace until finally, exhausted and drenched in sweat he can't lift his arms. He stands unsteadily before the bag, his chest heaving. His body screams for him to stop that it has reached its limit but...

He sets his body. Raises his fists and throws a punch then another slowly at first then gaining speed and strength...

INT. POLICE STATION SQUAD ROOM - DAY

DETECTIVE FEIST

(on phone)

-you have got to be kidding me.  
That is such a load of crap! NO!  
No way do you get off that easy.  
It's **YOUR** decision, **YOU** explain it.  
I want you down here in the next  
half hour. I don't care about pre-  
trial motions! You can threaten all  
you want but if I don't see you here  
in the next thirty minutes I will  
come down and drag you back here in  
handcuffs if I have to!

Slams down the phone.

Puts his head in his hands. Breathes deeply.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Goddamnit.

Pulls out a notebook. Searches for a number. Dials.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Castle? Frank? It's Detective Feist. Yes, I realize it has been a while. Well, yes there have been some developments. I was wondering if you were available to come to the office to discuss them. There is a lot of legal-ese involved that I think would be best explained face to face. Forty-five minutes would be fine. I'll see you then.

Feist hangs up. Sighs, rubbing a hand across his weary face.

INT. POLICE STATION SQUAD ROOM - LATER

Feist is at his desk a cell phone in one ear, computer mouse in hand clicking, printing off documents.

Desk phone rings.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 (to cell phone)  
 Hold on.  
 (answers desk phone)  
 Yeah. Okay, send him back.

Hangs up both phones. Crosses the office to greet Castle as he is escorted inside.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 (shaking hands)  
 Thanks for coming in. Come with me.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY LARRY TALBOT is already there. He is talking on his phone.

Unamused glance at Feist. Finishes his call.

D.A. TALBOT  
 (to Feist)  
 Glad you could make it.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 Assistant District Attorney Larry Talbot, this is Frank Castle.

D.A. TALBOT  
 Mr. Castle.

Castle nods as they shake hands.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Attorney Talbot has taken over for  
ADA Walsh and he wanted to update  
you on the status of your case.

D.A. TALBOT  
Thank you, detective.

CASTLE  
What happened to the other guy?

D.A. TALBOT  
He decided to retire.

CASTLE  
Retire? I've been waiting almost a  
year and now he decides to retire?

D.A. TALBOT  
Apparently he had some health issues.  
Now, let me start off by saying that  
a lot of work went into your case.  
Hundreds of man hours in fact. That  
work was necessary because of the  
unique nature of the case.

CASTLE  
What's so unique?

D.A. TALBOT  
Well, for starters there was a total  
lack of witnesses, beyond yourself.

CASTLE  
There were two other people who  
witnessed the shooting. What about  
them?

D.A. TALBOT  
We have had to distance ourselves  
from them.

CASTLE  
Meaning what?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Meaning Mrs. Cullen, the old lady,  
well we got word she smokes marijuana.  
Medicinal, for her cancer.

CASTLE  
So?

D.A. TALBOT  
The defense would challenge that he  
mental state was impaired at the  
time.

CASTLE  
(gritting his teeth)  
And the other?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Mr. Lopez has been kicked out of the country. Apparently an immigration judge noticed some violations with his work visa.

CASTLE  
Convenient. So where does that leave us?

Beat.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Attorney Talbot is withdrawing the charges.

Castle turns and glares at Talbot.

D.A. TALBOT  
Uh - Yes. That is correct. But this isn't something that was decided on a whim. There was a very complicated set of circumstances that were taken into account before the decision was made.  
(closes the file)  
Unfortunately I am pressed for time but my office will make arrangements at a later-.

CASTLE  
Now.

D.A. TALBOT  
Excuse me?

CASTLE  
Now.

D.A. TALBOT  
(opens the file)  
Um- all right. Well in addition to the lack of witnesses-.

CASTLE  
The video. You have the video with these men on it.

D.A. TALBOT  
Yes, well unfortunately that has been declared inadmissible.

CASTLE

WHAT!? How?

D.A. TALBOT

Apparently there was a break in the chain of evidence. It was discovered that at some point the video card disappeared. It was recovered but the judge has ruled it inadmissible.

CASTLE

Who did it?

D.A. TALBOT

We're looking into that.

CASTLE

What about shell casings? They had automatics. The ground had to be littered with them. You couldn't find a finger-print on any of them?

D.A. TALBOT

There were just too many for the ballistics lab to get through. They already have a eight month backlog-.

CASTLE

So you're too busy to put these guys away?

D.A. TALBOT

No, noting of the sort. It's just that they are very behind in their work. But unfortunately that doesn't change the fact that all of the individuals have alibis for the time of the - incident.

DETECTIVE FEIST

(sarcastic)

And don't even think about challenging those alibi's of these fine upstanding citizens.

CASTLE

I don't give a shit what they are. Those men were there. They gunned down my family! I will testify to that!

D.A. TALBOT

That brings us to another point. I am reluctant to have you on the stand.

CASTLE

Why?



D.A. TALBOT

We did a background check. On you. I needed a sense of what kind of witness you would be. Your records from the Corps are impressive if not outstanding.

CASTLE

Your point?

D.A. TALBOT

You know what Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is? Headaches, anxiety-.

CASTLE

You have got to be kidding.

D.A. TALBOT

-nightmares, paranoia. Those terms are in your psych evaluation. Now, suppose I put you on the stand and opposing council takes you back to the day your family died and presses you about what happened. About what you saw. Every minute detail-.

CASTLE

I answer the questions.

D.A. TALBOT

-and he continues to question you. But not only questioning you. He casts doubt on everything that you saw. 'Mr. Castle, are you absolutely certain you saw those men?' 'But Mr. Castle you were wounded, in shock. How can you be sure that it was my client that you saw?.' And you say; 'Well Mr. Lawyer, I saw that son of a bitch...' You give him the slightest opening he will pounce and portray you as a paranoid burn out who thinks he saw an enemy insurgent charging across the desert.

CASTLE

So because I served my country, because I did the job my country asked me to do, my word is useless? That I'm unreliable?

D.A. TALBOT

No, what I mean is-.

CASTLE

-the system places more value on the word of a worthless piece of shit mobster than the man who lost his family. These motherfuckers killed my family and deserve to rot in hell.

D.A. TALBOT

Now that is the kind of offensive comment that would destroy an entire case. Juries could assume that you have already judged these people guilty. The defense would question your objectivity.

CASTLE

Fuck objectivity. Tell me; do you have a family?

(Talbot nods)

Ever heard the sound of a bullet striking a human body? Not a nice sound. Kind of a wet smack. So would you be offended hearing those sounds when bullets tear into *your* children ripping holes in *their* flesh? Would you be offended hearing your children plead for you to help them as they watched their blood and guts pour out of holes in their bellies? Would that offend you? Would it offend you to hear your wife struggle to breathe as her lungs filled up with her own blood until she drowned?

Talbot says nothing. Can't look Castle in the eye.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

You are such a fucking moron. You think I'm gonna break down because some dick-head lawyer talks about the day my family died? I relive it every day.

Castle leaves.

Feist follows.

HALLWAY

Castle marches down the hallway. Feist jogs to catch up.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Frank! Frank, wait up!

Castle stops. He is seething. He looks ready to hit something, anything.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Look, Talbot is an asshole with the  
 personality of a turd but you had to  
 know. I wanted you to hear before  
 the news got the story.

CASTLE  
 That's great.

Turns away.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 Frank please. Let me explain. Let's  
 get out of here. Grab some dinner  
 or a drink or something.

Castle glares at him.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Sorry, that sounded like a terrible  
 pick up line. Please just sit down.  
 Let me explain where we go from here.

CASTLE  
 You aren't going anywhere. You have  
 no case. You won't do anything.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 Please.

DOWN THE HALL

Another detective exits an INTERVIEW ROOM but doesn't secure  
 the door.

The **PRISONER** inside bolts, running down the hall.

Feist spots him.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Hey!

Feist chases after him. Drags him down from behind.

Other officers quickly pile on top wrestling with the  
 prisoner.

Castle watches the melee.

Feist spots him.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Frank. Fourth desk over. I'll be  
 right there.

Castle nods and walks away.

FEIST'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Feist comes around the partition.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
 Sorry about that. Guy's on his third  
 strike so I guess he's gotta try-.

The cubicle is empty.

Another officer comes around the partition.

DETECTIVE WOO  
 Sorry Feist. Didn't see you there.

Feist waves him off.

DETECTIVE WOO (CONT'D)  
 My printer's busted. I sent some  
 stuff to yours.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 Whatever.

DETECTIVE WOO  
 Shit. Yours is broken too.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 Just needs paper.

He tears open a package, refills the tray. Paper begins to  
 spew out.

DETECTIVE WOO  
 Thanks.

Feist turns to his desk. Wakes up his sleeping computer.  
 It is logged on to the N.C.I.C CRIMINAL DATA-BASE.

Frowns.

EXT. STREET -- LATER

Castle sits in his truck glaring at the flashing sign for  
 the TITTY-TAT BAR. The marquee proclaims 'The Best Topless  
 Dancers in the Tri-State Area.'

Castle's hands grip the steering wheel so hard his knuckles  
 go white. Sheets of paper are spread on the seat, the pages  
 he printed from the N.C.I.C data base.

CASTLE'S POV sees a group of cars wheel into the parking  
 lot. Johnny and his crew get out. Laughing like frat boys  
 they enter the bar.

He reaches for the door handle. Stops. Puts his head down  
 on the steering wheel. Deep angry breathing.

Finally he can contain it no longer. The look on his face is the one we saw in Iraq. Throws open the door and marches across the street.

Never notices the PLAIN PANEL VAN buried in a parking lot.

INT. PANEL VAN

Two NYPD intelligence officers man the tape recorders and video cameras showing inside the Titty-Tat Bar.

OFFICER JENKINS

Well, well, well the gangs all here.

Officer Bradley snorts, flicks on the tape recorder.

INT. TITTY-TAT BAR

Johnny and his crew stroll inside, hand shakes and back slaps with the bouncers and the manager.

Three barely legal girls gyrate around poles in various states of undress. Another girl, KOR-RAY, is doing a private dance for a middle aged businessman.

Johnny spots her and marches over.

JOHNNY

C'mon.

Takes her arm pulling her off the businessman.

BUSINESSMAN

Hey! What are you doing?

KOR-RAY

It's okay baby. I'll be right back.

JOHNNY

(laughing)

No you won't.

BUSINESSMAN

You can't just take her like that.

I paid.

Johnny pushes her away turning quickly to the businessman getting right in his face.

JOHNNY

I can't do what lard-ass?

He lifts his shirt front to reveal a PISTOL in his waistband.

Businessman's face blanches.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

That's right fat boy, you sit your  
ass down and stay there. Better  
yet, go home to your fat wife. Get  
her to give you some.

He turns away laughing.

ENTRANCE TO TITTY-TAT BAR

The door comes open and Castle marches inside. He is  
seething.

Bouncer grabs him but Castle twists away grabbing the bouncers  
wrist and yanking, popping the man's shoulder.

Johnny is on a table dancing while Kor-ray dances on the  
stage. His friends cheer them on.

Castle shoves through the crowd and kicks the table from  
beneath Johnny. Johnny hits the floor hard.

Castle hauls Johnny to his feet and starts speed bagging  
him.

Johnny's crew jump in and it degenerates into a brawl. There  
is nothing pretty or stylized about it. Everything becomes  
a weapon; fists, knees, teeth, bottles, chairs. Castle is  
outnumbered but that doesn't stop him. He fights like he is  
possessed, taking punishment but dealing it out ten-fold.

EXT. PANEL VAN

Officer Jenkins presses his ear-phones to his ears.

OFFICER JENKINS

(shocked)

It sounds like World War Three in  
there!!

(rips off his head-  
phones)

Call for back up!

Jenkins throws open the doors and races across the street.

INT. TITTY-TAT BAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Jenkins throws open the door and runs inside.

OFFICER JENKINS

Police! Everyone on the floor!  
Now!

He was right, it is a war zone. The floor is littered with  
broken glass, tables and chairs. The dancers have  
disappeared. Johnny's friends lay on the floor clutching  
injuries.

He rushes to the front where all the action is.

Castle has five men cornered, their backs to the stage. Castle is a bloodied mess, his clothes are torn. He holds a broken beer bottle in one hand and the remnants of a chair in the other.

OFFICER JENKINS (CONT'D)  
Police! Drop the weapons now!

Castle doesn't move.

JOHNNY  
Arrest this freak! He attacked me!

OFFICER JENKINS  
(to Johnny)  
Shut up!  
(to Castle)  
Drop the weapons on the floor or I  
will be forced to shoot. Don't make  
me do that.

Beat.

Castle turns. Still has that look in his eye, the one that says 'I will kill every last one of you.'

Jenkins swallows hard. Finger moves to the trigger.

Castle looks at him and the gun without a hint of fear.

B.G. back-up officers arrive, piling through the door.

Castle drops the weapons on the floor.

JOHNNY  
(stepping from behind  
his crew)  
'Bout damn time!

An officer approaches to handcuff Castle but hesitates. Castle puts his hands behind his back and the officer handcuffs him.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Finally. You guys took your sweet  
time getting here-.

Another officer grabs Johnny kicking the back of his leg dropping him to his knees.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
What the hell are you doing?

OFFICER JENKINS

This guy went to a lot of trouble to kick your ass. So until we figure why, you get to go to jail too.

They march him and the others to the door.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

Johnny and his lawyer, AL SINICROPE, sit across the table from Officer Jenkins.

SINICROPE

I demand that my client be released. He has been held for two days without cause.

OFFICER JENKINS

We're just completing all the paper work.

SINICROPE

And what about the attacker? I haven't heard anything about charges being brought against him. I needn't remind you that my client was the one attacked by this maniac. An unprovoked attack.

OFFICER JENKINS

Oh I don't know if you want that.

SINICROPE

Of course we want that! Do your job. He should be charged with assault, attempted murder, uttering threats, destruction of property. Do I need to go on?

OFFICER JENKINS

You could, but an investigation like that would take some time to complete. And during that time your 'establishment' would have to remain closed.

SINICROPE

Don't play games.

OFFICER JENKINS

You should also know that that investigation would have to look into all the goings on at said establishment. Which would include what goes on in the backrooms involving the dancers.



SINICROPE

Those are the entertainers' private rooms. What they do there has nothing to do with my client.

OFFICER JENKINS

And those 'entertainers,' you have all the proper documentation for them I assume? I mean; I couldn't help but notice that a few of them appeared to be quite young, possibly under the age of sixteen.

SINICROPE

So they look young. There's no crime in that.

OFFICER JENKINS

I also noticed that two of them spoke with Eastern European accents. Another spoke no English at all. We may have to involve immigration to verify that they are legally allowed to be in this country.

SINICROPE

That's preposterous.

OFFICER JENKINS

I'm just telling which direction our investigation may go if you insist we pursue charges against Mr. Castle. Who knows where it will lead.

Sincrope looks at Johnny who still hasn't looked up. Looks at Officer Jenkins.

SINICROPE

Where at we with the release process?

OFFICER JENKINS

Let me go look into that.

INTERVIEW ROOM #3

Feist leads Castle into the room. Castle has been bandaged up and still wears handcuffs. D.A. Talbot follows close behind. He slams his briefcase on the table.

D.A. TALBOT

What the hell were you thinking?

Castle glares at him.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You want to dial is back a little.

D.A. TALBOT

Dial it back? He walked into a business and without provocation assaulted ten men! And in the process destroyed the place.

CASTLE

Sounds like I need a lawyer. Maybe I should hire Canselli's.

D.A. TALBOT

What-? Don't get cute. There are grounds to press charges. And before you deny anything I should tell you there is video of you attacking these men. That's right. A patron shot it on his phone. It has been on Youtube since last night.

CASTLE

Be a shame if it was inadmissible.

D.A. TALBOT

(snorts)

You think you can go around busting heads and it will make a difference? They are a business. An organization. With power, financial and otherwise. So you beat up a couple of their thugs. Big deal. You're not even a speed bump to them.

CASTLE

Are you going to charge me or not?

Beat.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Canselli's lawyer is *reconsidering* pressing charges.

CASTLE

So cut me loose.

Beat.

D.A. TALBOT

Do it.

(Feist removes the handcuffs)

But I'm warning you, this is not the wild west or Afghanistan for that matter. We have laws to follow and like it or not, you will follow them.

CASTLE

Guess what you can do with your laws.

Castle exits.

D.A. TALBOT

Another night in holding would change that attitude.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Not something I would advise. We had to move him to segregation last night.

D.A. TALBOT

I saw that.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Canselli got word to general population. Offered a bounty to anyone who messed up Castle.

D.A. TALBOT

But...

DETECTIVE FEIST

Three broken jaws, one shattered knee, a dislocated hip and one guy with his arm broken in two places. And that doesn't count the missing teeth, mashed noses' and black eyes. Yeah. We put Castle in segregation for protection. Theirs. Not his.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Castle kneels before the graves of his family. Grass has begun to grow.

CASTLE

I'm so sorry. I know this isn't what you would want but I can't see another way. I tried to let the law do its job but they failed. I can't let them get away with what they did.

(tearing up)

I wish I was with you.

INT. CANSSELLI'S LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Isadore stands watching his big screen tv. Johnny walks past.

ISADORE

You just don't know when to quit, do you?

JOHNNY  
 (entering)  
 What?

ISADORE  
 I pay alla this money to get you  
 sprung and the first thing you do is  
 get into a fight with him.

JOHNNY  
 So I kicked his ass, what's the big  
 deal?

ISADORE  
 Really? Kicked his ass? You wanna  
 watch?  
 (steps aside to reveal  
 the tv screen)  
 Youtube. Ten thousand hits so far,  
 Mr. Big Deal.

Johnny steps further into the room watching the tv.

Insert VIDEO shot by the businessman on his phone. Shows  
 Castle attacking Johnny and Johnny being dumped  
 unceremoniously on his butt.

JOHNNY  
 He jumped me from behind!

ISADORE  
 And then he rag-dolled you like a  
 punk. My own kid getting his ass  
 whipped in his own place. You're  
 making me a laughing stock!

JOHNNY  
 It wasn't my fault!

ISADORE  
 I'm so sick of hearing that! Get  
 the hell out of here!

Isadore turns away. Johnny sulks out of the room.

INT. ENTRYWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Johnny shuffles down the hall. Vinnie and Johnny's girl  
 friend, RITA, enter. They are laughing. Rita munches on  
 licorice.

VINNIE  
 Hey, Johnny! Should start calling  
 you 'The Teflon-Don.'

JOHNNY  
 Huh?

VINNIE

You know, like Gotti. Nothing sticks to you.

JOHNNY

That's stupid.

RITA

Oh baby don't be sore. Let's go to the club and celebrate! I can make all those bruises feel better.

JOHNNY

Don't you get it? I ain't got nothing to celebrate.

RITA

You're upset about that video?

JOHNNY

The video?! You've seen it too?

RITA

Well...yeah somebody told me about it.

Shoves her aside. Turns to Vinnie.

VINNIE

Uh yeah somebody showed me. But don't worry. I told him if I ever catch him showing it to anyone I would break his hands.

JOHNNY

You'd break his hands? You going to break everybody's hands that watches that thing? Like, ten thousand people have seen it so far. I'm a laughing stock!

Grabs a vase and smashes it on the floor.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Get the car.

Storms out.

INT. THE CORNER MARKET -- LATER

Castle shuffles into the store making his way to the back where he grabs a jug of milk.

SAMUEL CLARK, Samantha's father steps to the counter to greet him.

SAMUEL

Frank.

CASTLE

Hi Sam.

SAMUEL

(nods at bandages)

You okay?

CASTLE

Fell down.

SAMUEL

(ringing it in)

We haven't seen you in a while. We stopped by a few times but there you weren't home.

\*

CASTLE

I...don't spend a lot of time there.

SAMUEL

(nods)

I'm sorry if Samantha upset you when she came by that day. We had been out of the country for a month and all she kept talking about was seeing Lisa when she got home.

CASTLE

How is she doing?

SAMUEL

She gets sad from time to time. I can see she misses Lisa. Can't really find the words to explain what happened to an eleven year old.

CASTLE

If you figure it out, let me know. Be seeing you.

Takes the bag and leaves.

EXT. CASTLE HOME -- LATER

Castle walks the sidewalk to his home. Usual activity, kids playing, parents puttering.

Large black 4X4 rolls down the street with the stereo pumping. The truck is completely tricked out, massive ram bar and winch, running boards, over-sized off-road tires. A gleaming black BMW slides in behind. The license reads VINSBEEMR.

JOHNNY CANSELLI steps down from the 4X4.

RITA, gets out of the passenger side, a look of disgust as she surveys the neighborhood.

VINNIE gets out of his pride and joy, the gleaming BMW. He dresses more conservatively than Johnny in a sport coat and slacks.

SEBASTIANO, CARMINE, PETE and NICO get out of the back of the truck. They were also involved in murdering Castle's family.

VINNIE  
So this is suburbia? Smells like  
piss.

RITA  
And diapers.

JOHNNY  
(to Rita)  
Get back inna truck.

She does.

DRIVEWAY

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
(to Castle)  
Hey! Soldier boy!  
(to his friends)  
Mr. army man is running away.

Castle puts bag by the door. Comes down the driveway.

Johnny and Vinnie approach.

CASTLE  
Here for another beating punk?

VINNIE  
(getting in his face)  
You got big mouth for a guy who likes  
to throw sucker punches.

The others crowd in close. Castle doesn't flinch. He stands right in front of them. The look in his eyes says; 'if this goes, it is going all way.'

CASTLE  
You going to cry? Or you going to  
do something about it?

JOHNNY  
You think you're some kinda bad-ass  
just 'cause you're a soldier or  
something? That supposed to scare  
me?

CASTLE

Marine.

JOHNNY

Whatever-.

CASTLE

If you aren't going to do something  
then get your shit off my lawn.

Johnny whips up his shirt to reveal a PISTOL tucked in the waistband.

JOHNNY

Keep running your mouth an you're  
gonna end up inna box.

Castle doesn't move. Eyes move from the gun to Johnny's.

CASTLE

That the one you used to kill my  
family? My wife and children.

The neighbors are watching the spectacle.

B.G. Feist and Lacefield drive up.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

So you want to start shooting right  
here? Are there enough kids around?  
Maybe we should go around the block  
to the day-care so you and your  
pissant friends can start blasting.

JOHNNY

I think-.

VINNIE

(grabbing him)

Not here. Not now.

Johnny steps back but then pulls away. He makes a charge expecting Vinnie to stop him. Vinnie misses. Johnny stops. Doesn't want to get too close to Castle.

CASTLE

Move along punk.

Vinnie gets a hold of Johnny. The others help 'restrain' Johnny.

JOHNNY

What'd you say? Lemme go, I'm gonna  
jack this fool!

DETECTIVE FEIST

There a problem here?



VINNIE  
No, no problem at all.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Time for you people to leave.

JOHNNY  
(to Castle)  
That's okay. We know where you live.

CASTLE  
And anytime you and your fuck buddies  
want to stop by, feel free. I'll be  
waiting.

They jostle to get Johnny back. He kicks over the garbage  
can. Looks back at Castle. Smug.

Castle looks at him.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
See you around.

JOHNNY  
(rests a hand on his  
covered pistol)  
Not if I see you first.

CASTLE  
You won't.

Johnny's face drops. They hustle him into the vehicles and  
speed off.

Castle watches them leave. Picks up the garbage cans.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Sorry for interrupting.

Castle walks back inside.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
(to Feist)  
I think we saved them their second  
ass kicking this week.

They follow Castle into his house.

INT. CASTLE HOME -- CONTINUOUS

The kitchen has barely been touched. The house looks frozen  
in time.

Feist looks into the garage seeing a MILITARY COT and SLEEPING  
BAG set out.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
You doing some camping?

Lacefield steps deeper into the house looking around.

CASTLE  
What do you want?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Wanted to offer you a drive into the city to pick up your vehicle from the impound lot. It was towed from the peeler bar.

CASTLE  
You're offering me a ride?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Hey, I'm trying to help you out a bit.

CASTLE  
I bet. I've got to put away these groceries.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Don't worry about that. Detective Lopez can take care of that.

Motions out the door. DETECTIVE LOPEZ, thirties, steps inside.

Castle looks from one to the other

CASTLE  
Kind of sexist isn't it? Having the lady putting away the groceries.

DETECTIVE LOPEZ  
I lost a bet. Now I'm stuck with the joe-jobs for a week.

CASTLE  
Right.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Impound closes in about an hour so we should be able to make it.

INT. POLICE CAR -- LATER

CASTLE  
Would you mind calling detective Lopez?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Why?

CASTLE

Save her some time. Tell her the steamer trunk full of automatic weapons in the attic. The claymores are under the cushion. And there is an RPG in the closet.

Feist looks over his shoulder, incredulous. Lacefield snickers.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You aren't...

CASTLE

Serious? No. But you know who did have a gun? The Canselli kid. And you let him walk right past you.

DETECTIVE FEIST

So what was I supposed to do? Grab him in a choke hold? Start throwing punches?

CASTLE

I'd be a start.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You don't get it, these guys are big business. It's all about money and power with them. They have as many accountants as they do thugs.

CASTLE

Sounds like you envy them.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Not a chance. But they don't respond to busting heads. You try that and all you end up with are sore knuckles.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

You do have to admit, that video was fun to watch.

CASTLE

What video?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

The one of you pounding the snot out of Johnny. It's all over Youtube and Facebook. Lots of people liked what they saw. They've even got a name for you.

CASTLE

A name?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
They're calling you, The Punisher.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT -- LATER

Castle finishes signing the paper work. Reaches for his wallet.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
No, we've got this.

CASTLE  
The least you can do?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
I'm not your enemy, Castle.

CASTLE  
No, you're not. But you're not helping either.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Please stay out of this. I don't want to see you behind bars. Or worse.

CASTLE  
What could be worse?

Castle glares at him then walks to his truck. Lacefield stands beside it.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
You should really clean out that junk underneath the seats.

Lacefield walks away.

Castle frowns. Reaches under the seat to find the FILE from the CRIMINAL DATABASE.

Looks at Lacefield but he never looks back as they drive away.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Castle sits at his workbench with the file spread out before him. Sheets from the file with Johnny and his crew are tacked to the wall.

There is a collage of images as Castle reads the rap sheets of Johnny's crew.

We see NICO, known pedophile and pornographer as he escorts an obviously UNDERAGE GIRL onto the set of a porn movie shoot.

Next is SEBASTIANO, loan shark and enforcer as he makes his way from business to business collecting envelopes of money or beating up those who can't pay.

PETE comes after that; bar owner, drug pusher as he slings drinks and slides small baggies of cocaine surreptitiously to patrons young and old.

CARMINE works at the 'bank' receiving suitcases full of money to be laundered through a gambling house, the PARA DICE PIT. Carmine uses a CARD to access the counting room where the money is delivered.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Castle stands before a wall now covered with his own surveillance and profiles of Canselli's business.

He turns his eyes falling to his SEA-CHEST. Opening it he finds some clothing and souvenirs of his deployment. A bundle of photographs falls out. Castle shuffles through the pictures impassively until he finds one from his last mission.

INSERT picture showing Castle and the Canadians off-loading the students from the LAV. Painted on the side of the LAV is a SKULL marking their kills. Castles eyes narrow.

He turns back to the kitchen and the kids PAINTS still waiting on the table.

LATER

Castle works at the workbench. All we see is his back. Finished he holds up a BLACK SHIRT. Donning it we see a GRIMACING WHITE SKULL painted on the chest.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

NICO, twenties, steps out of a small office building with 'After Hours Productions' on the door. This is the 'studio' and server warehouse for his porn business.

Nico strolls the busy street casting leering glances at any pretty woman who passes by. Approaching a busy intersection he stops behind two FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. The girls wear uniforms, skirts, white tops, knee-high socks.

Nico drops to a knee as if tying a shoe. When he does he reaches forward with his cell phone filming the unsuspecting girls up-skirt. An older woman next to him gasps. Nico stands, offers a smirk then waggles his tongue at her.

NICO  
You wanna watch?

She gasps and turns away. Nico laughs.

The light changes and everyone starts moving. Nico strolls slowly as he watches the footage. At the next intersection he pushes his way to the front, standing on the curb.

He is absorbed in his video and never notices the HAND slip through the crowd to give him a SHOVE. Nico stumbles forward a step INTO THE ROADWAY. He spins back looking for whoever shoved him.

BLARING TRUCK HORN. Nico turns just as a CEMENT TRUCK slams into him.

Castle strolls down the sidewalk as chaos erupts.

EXT. ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

Even though it is only four stories high the rooftop offers a view of the sparkling lights of the city. Below, traffic hums along as normal oblivious to what is happening above.

ALFRED, seventies, huddles over his kneeling wife and granddaughter, his arms wrapped around them.

Before them stands SEBASTIANO, twenties. He holds a BASEBALL BAT in one hand, a PISTOL, in the other.

SEBASTIANO

Okay old man, time to choose.

He gestures with both his weapons.

ALFRED

But I can't...

SEBASTIANO

You said you were short last month so I give you a break. Then I see new coolers in your shop.

ALFRED

But I needed to replace them. I can't make money to pay you if I've got nothing to sell.

SEBASTIANO

You use your own money for that. Not mine. So what's it going to be?

ALFRED

But I paid...

SEBASTIANO

But, but, but. That's all I hear.

ALFRED

(sobbing)

You can't do this.

SEBASTIANO

I can't what? I can burn you down.  
I can bust your legs. I can put a  
bullet in your wrinkly old skull.  
Unless you think you can stop me.  
Is that it? You the big dick up  
here?

ALFRED

Big...dick? What? No.

SEBASTIANO

Yeah, that's you. Know what? You  
whip it out right here and I won't  
kill you. I'll just bust you up a  
bit. Maybe the insurance will be  
enough to cover what you owe.

ALFRED

I don't understand.

SEBASTIANO

You drop trou and whip out that big  
dick right now or I put a bullet in  
your head. Then I throw the old hag  
over the side before I get down to  
some serious business with the cutie  
there.

Alfred steps in front of the women, his head bowed.

ALFRED

You can't.

Alfred shudders as he sobs.

Sebastiano snickers.

O.S crunch of gravel.

Sebastiano turns - WHACK- and eats a haymakers to the jaw.  
Sebastiano drops his weapons as he stumbles. A KICK hits  
him in the crotch lifting him off the ground. His stumbling  
has taken him near to the edge. He reaches up to protect  
himself - CRACK - the bat shatters his forearm.

Sebastiano howls. A BOOT presses against his chest pushing  
him against the parapet. With a shove Sebastiano topples  
over the edge.

Castle steps onto the parapet. Sebastiano hangs by one hand.  
He slips. Castle steps on his fingers stopping him.

SEBASTIANO

(pleading)

Help me. Please...

CASTLE  
Take your pick.

SEBASTIANO  
What?

Castle looks at the baseball bat then the pistol. Then at Sebastiano.

SEBASTIANO (CONT'D)  
No! Wait! Please! I - I know you.  
You're that guy. Right? That's  
what this is about. Your family.  
I'm sorry. Please don't do this.  
Don't let me-.

Castle lifts his foot.

Sebastiano screams the whole way to the ground.

Castle walks past the family.

EXT. ALLEY -- MORNING

Police officers mill about as Forensics people catalogue Sebastianos murder site.

Detective Feist arrives, badging his way through the line of onlookers.

Detective Lacefield strolls over to meet him.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Who was it?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Sebastiano. Took a header from the  
roof. Didn't really nail that super-  
hero landing though.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Seriously?  
(Lacefield gives an  
indifferent shrug)  
What happened? Why was he up there?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
We've got three witnesses but only  
one is talking. She's telling us  
Sebastiano was collecting. They  
were short this month so Sebastiano  
took them up to the roof and was  
threatening them to get his money.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
And?



DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

She says things were about to get violent when 'someone' came out of the shadows and hit Sebastiano. Knocked him to the edge of the roof.

DETECTIVE FEIST

'Someone?'

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Her words. She said the two of them talked and then she heard a scream and a thud. She didn't hear what was said.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Did she get a look at this 'someone?'

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

(shakes his head)

Too dark. Said it was a guy. Big.

DETECTIVE FEIST

'A big guy.' Well that narrows it down. She didn't see anything else?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

A skull.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Who's skull?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

The only other thing she mentioned was a skull. She said the guy had a big white skull on the front of his shirt. Said it scared the hell out of her. After that she didn't want to see anything else.

DETECTIVE FEIST

That's two of them. Goddamn it. He's going after them.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Could be a coincidence.

DETECTIVE FEIST

There's no coincidence. After Nico got turned into a speed bump someone got into the server room for their porn site and dosed the equipment with sand, beach sand. Completely destroyed everything. Canselli's looking at about five million in equipment at least.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Who knows how much he will be losing  
out on with the protection racket.

(Lacefield smirks)

Are you enjoying this?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

This is the first time anyone has  
actually hurt these guys. I mean  
really hurt them. So, yes, I'm loving  
it.

DETECTIVE FEIST

But what he's doing is against the  
law.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Kid, I've been doing this for twenty-  
eight years. I can see retirement  
on the horizon. Just once I want  
these guys get what coming to them.

DETECTIVE FEIST

We can't allow it to happen.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

If it is Castle, and I'm not saying  
it is, after what happened to his  
family, do you think we have a chance  
of stopping him?

INT. DINER - DAY

Castle sits eating alone at a booth away from other customers.

B.G. Outside a SPORTSCAR with an oversized spoiler wheels  
into the parking lot. CARMINE gets out giving the lot a  
quick once over. He walks to the diner and enters.

Castle continues to eat as Carmine surveys the room before  
spotting him. He walks to Castle's table.

CARMINE

You're Castle, right?  
(Castle ignores him)  
Been looking for you.  
(Castle glances up)  
Got a message.

CASTLE

Your boss know you're here?

CARMINE

No. I'M telling you.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

(takes a breath)

We never got a chance to be properly introduced. I'm Carmine. I work for Johnny Canselli.

CASTLE

Impressive resume. What's your message?

CARMINE

It got a little heated the other day. Some things were said...

CASTLE

What's the matter? You mamma doesn't like you hearing swears?

Carmine laughs without humor.

CARMINE

Something like that. Look, what happened to your family, well you got in the way of business. That's all. It wasn't personal.

CASTLE

You call murdering a woman and two children business? What sort of fucking moron are you?

CARMINE

Hey! Who you calling moron? I come here polite and civil and you start talking smack. You got no respect, you know that? I-.

CASTLE

Respect for what? You cure cancer? Feed the poor? No, you're a Scar-face wanna be dressed in a cheap suit. Get lost messenger-boy.

CARMINE

I ain't no messenger boy. This is a peace offering. But it's a one time offer.

Finally Castle stops eating and glares up at him.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

You're affecting our business. It stops now.

CASTLE

Or else what, messenger boy?

CARMINE

I ain't no messenger boy.

CASTLE

Sounds like you pansies are scared.  
Pissing yourselves when the lights  
go out.

Carmine puts his hands on the table, leaning forward to get right into Castle's face.

CARMINE

Listen to me tough guy; I'm trying  
to be civilized here. But if you  
talk like that again I'm going to  
take you outside and shove my 'peace  
offering' up your ass.

INSERT pistol dangling in a shoulder rig. Castle also spots the LANYARD with the ACCESS CARD.

Castle hits both arms. Carmine topples forward face first into the table. Before he can recover Castle grabs his head slamming it into the table once, twice...six times. He stops when the corner of the table breaks off.

Carmine slides to the floor unconscious.

Castle pulls the pistol from Carmine's holster.

WAITRESS rushes over. Sees Castle, Carmine's body, the gun. She freezes.

CASTLE

Got a back door to this place?

She nods and points. Then turns and hurries the other way.

Castle grabs him by the throat and yanks the lanyard with the card from his neck.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PARA-DICE PIT BAR -- NIGHT

The three story building is nondescript but the parking lot is full. A bright neon sign advertises PARA-DICE PIT. At ground level is a restaurant/club advertising off track betting.

INT. PARA-DICE PIT - NIGHT

Johnny's office/living space.

O.S. music from the club thumps through the walls.

Rita sits at the desk snorting a rail of coke using licorice. On the wall behind her are shelves lined with DIE-CAST CARS, Johnny's collection of toys.

Johnny, dressed only in jeans, does some pathetic biceps curls (too much weight, too little form) in front of the mirror next to his gleaming weight machine.

He finishes and then admires himself in the mirror. Adds more body oil to make himself look ripped.

Goes to a dressing table that is covered with sunglasses. He begins trying them on. Not on his face but on the top of his head.

O.S. knock at the door.

JOHNNY

Yeah.

Vinnie enters looking worried.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Where's Carmine?

VINNIE

Dunno. I called his cell but there's no answer. Same at his place.

JOHNNY

What's going on with the bank? All good there?

VINNIE

Tong brought in just over three million for us to clean.

JOHNNY

Good.

Johnny goes to the window.

Johnny's P.O.V Carmine's car drives along the street.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

About fucking time.

Heads for the door.

INT. PARA DICE PIT

Many of the patrons go through the restaurant and off track betting to a gambling room in the back with card tables, roulette, craps. Business is brisk.

Upstairs in a CONTROL ROOM a security guard monitors cameras aimed at the gambling room, outside as well as the COUNTING ROOM above.

From the corner of his eye one security guard notices Carmine's car lurch into the parking lot.

Headlights blaze into the camera as it races towards the building before CRASHING through the front of the restaurant. Another monitor shows the damage inside as the car crashes through tables and booths before finally coming to a halt at the bar.

The security guard is out of his chair and running for the door, a radio in hand calling for help.

INT. PARA DICE PIT

Johnny pulls open the door into the Para Dice Pit.

JOHNNY

Jesus Christ! What the fuck is he doing? The fucking idiot...

The security guard rushes in. Runs to the car.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Get that idiot out of there!

His face twists as he SMELLS something in the air.

INSERT growing pool of GASOLINE beneath the ruptured gas-tank.

EXT. STREET

A GAS CAN rests on the sidewalk in a puddle of gasoline. A match is struck and falls into the puddle. With a whoosh the gasoline ignites. The flames begin racing along the sidewalk and around the corner following the path of the car.

INT. PARA DICE PIT

The security guard pulls open the door to find Carmine strapped in his seat. He isn't moving.

As the security guard reaches for the seatbelt he hears a whoosh of the flames racing into the restaurant chasing the fuel trail that leads to the GAS TANK.

Johnny is already scrambling for the door.

The fumes ignite in a cloud forcing everyone back. Quickly the restaurant is a scene of chaos as people flee.

By time the security guard remembers Carmine the car is surrounded by flames.

INT. BUILDING - COUNTING ROOM

Castle approaches the heavily secured door. He has a duffel bag over his shoulder, a baseball bat in one hand and Carmine's KEY CARD in the other.

Swinging the bat he smashes the camera. Then he swipes the card and opens the door.

The WORKERS stand behind a CAGED WALL. Around them are tables filled with BUNDLES OF MONEY. They have a monitor showing what is happening below.

They are shocked when Castle enters.

CASTLE

Out.

A few shake their heads, refusing to leave. Some back away.

Ignoring them from the duffel bag Castle produces a SMALL GAS CAN. He begins dumping it through the cage onto the money.

The workers still haven't gotten the hint.

Again from the bag Castle produces ROAD FLARES. He ignites one and tosses it through the cage. Whoosh. The money ignites.

The workers get the idea and race for the cage door. None looks back at Castle as he enters the cage and quickly scoops MONEY into the duffel bag. Leaving he ignites more flares, tossing them onto the money.

By the time he reaches the door the room is an inferno.

INT. PARADISE PIT -- DAY

The club is a soggy charred husk. Firemen sift through the debris looking for hot-spots.

Wisps of smoke drift for the car.

Feist stands next to the car examining the remains of Carmine.

Assistant DA Talbot steps cautiously inside and surveys the carnage.

Feist spots him.

DETECTIVE FEIST

I didn't think you came out until  
the network camera crews were awake.

D.A. TALBOT

Funny. You talk to Johnny?

DETECTIVE FEIST

By phone. He 'wasn't here all night.'  
And 'has no idea what happened.'

D.A. TALBOT  
What *did* happen here?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Valet parking gone horribly wrong?

D.A. TALBOT  
You brought your A material. Any  
I.d. on the burnt guy?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Used to be Carmine.

Talbot looks closer at the body.

D.A. TALBOT  
He still had his hands on the wheel.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Ten and two by the looks of it.

Talbot takes a moment. Walks out to the street. Sees the  
scorched pavement and the remnants of the flare.

D.A. TALBOT  
Jesus Christ. He's taking them all  
out. Is he trying to start a war?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Looks more like he's tearing them a  
new on.

D.A. TALBOT  
And how many innocent people got  
mixed up in this?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Not one. A few suffered smoke  
inhalation but otherwise no one else  
was injured.

D.A. TALBOT  
So who's left?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Haven't seen Vinnie but he might  
just be holed up. And Johnny.

D.A. TALBOT  
Christ a God-damn vigilante killer.  
What are they calling him; The  
Punisher? All right, here's what  
we're gonna do; nothing in your  
reports, no leaks to the press or I  
promise you we'll have a circus on  
(MORE)



D.A. TALBOT (CONT'D)  
our hands and the mayor will have  
our asses.

(rubs his forehead)  
Guess I'd better call the wife and  
start explaining.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
How's that?

D.A. TALBOT  
Promised to take her to the ballet  
next week. Got a feeling I'm not  
going to make it.

Flips open his phone.

INT. ISADORE CANSELLI'S HOME OFFICE -- DAY

Isadore is pacing, cellphone pressed to his ear. Finishing  
the call and tosses the phone on the table.

Johnny enters.

JOHNNY  
Hey, did you hear?

ISADORE  
Of course I heard.

JOHNNY  
The entire place went up.

ISADORE  
I KNOW!

JOHNNY  
Whoa. What are you getting pissed  
at me for?

ISADORE  
Because I lost fifty million dollars!  
That's why!

JOHNNY  
The club wasn't worth much.

ISADORE  
The bank you idiot! He burned  
everything that was in the bank.  
And it's going to cost me twice that  
when they come looking for their  
money back!

JOHNNY  
I didn't do it.

ISADORE

It was the Marine. This Punisher guy. And he's ripping *my* business apart!

JOHNNY

The son of a bitch killed my friends!

ISADORE

Who cares about those idiots? None of this would be happening if you and your crew hadn't screwed up.

JOHNNY

I'll take care of this.

ISADORE

And I'm sure he is shaking in his boots knowing that. *I'll* take care of it. You go hide under your bed.

Isadore picks up his phone again making a call. Johnny fumes for a moment before leaving the room making a call of his own.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Johnny sits at the table pouting. A plate of cookies sits in front of him next to a glass of scotch.

ROSALITA rushes in. She wraps him in a hug.

ROSALITA

(looking him over)

Are you okay baby? I heard about the club. You weren't hurt were you?

JOHNNY

No ma, I'm fine.

ROSALITA

Good. That's good. I was so scared when I heard this monster was trying to hurt my baby. I wanted to rip his eyes out and cut off his balls.

JOHNNY

Maybe you should talk to dad. He wants me to sit on my hands.

ROSALITA

What? But this guy, he killed Nico, Sebastiano and Carmine, God rest their souls. This can't be allowed to happen.

JOHNNY

Like I said, talk to dad.

ROSALITA

Don't worry about your father. He has other things to worry about. But I can't let someone try to hurt my baby boy.

JOHNNY

What're you going to do, write a note to his parents?

ROSALITA

I'm going to call that Chinaman, The Monk.

JOHNNY

I think he's Japanese.

ROSALITA

Whatever. I'll have him chat with this Marine.

JOHNNY

What about dad? If he finds out he'll be pissed.

ROSALITA

He'll figure it out when they find the Marine's body in the river months from now but by then it'll be too late.

JOHNNY

Damn ma, sometimes I think you should be running things.

ROSALITA

No, I could never do it.

JOHNNY

Why not?

ROSALITA

Too cut throat.

INT. ISADORE CANSELLI'S HOME OFFICE -- LATER

Isadore sits at his desk working on the computer.

O.S. knock at door.

Nicholas enters.

NICHOLAS

You wanted to see me?

ISADORE

Yeah. You looked into Kingston?

(nod)

What'd you find?

NICHOLAS

Checked the books. Looks like he's  
skimming you for a couple of years  
now. About three per-cent per year.

ISADORE

Per year? That little prick. So  
Johnny was right. That's a surprise.

NICHOLAS

Yeah.

Beat.

ISADORE

Anything else?

NICHOLAS

(hesitates)

Once I found the skimming I had  
another accountant take a real close  
look at everything.

ISADORE

And? Spit it out for Christsake.

NICHOLAS

It looks like Johnny's been skimming  
too.

(Isadore turns red)

Ain't much. About a million in the  
last two months.

ISADORE

A million! That punk. What's he  
doing with it?

NICHOLAS

Looks like he bought some property.  
A place on Carlton Street.

ISADORE

What the fuck did he do that for?  
What's there?

NICHOLAS

I went and checked. Place is a wreck.  
Never saw Johnny there. Saw a lot  
of the MDK crew though.

ISADORE

MDK? What is he doing with them?

(Nicholas shrugs)

Look into it. I want to know what's going on in that place.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE JOINT BAR -- NIGHT

Castle stands in the shadows outside the bar. Business isn't brisk but there are people entering.

A LIGHT blazes in the alley as a side door comes open.

A man gets out of a NEON GREEN LOW-RIDER parked at the curb. He saunters down the alley to the open door. He hands over a GYM BAG to Pete. This is Pete's drug delivery.

The delivery man saunters back to the car and drives away. It passes a GARBAGE TRUCK emptying dumpsters.

INT. THE JOINT BAR -- MOMENTS LATER

The place is dark, lit by old Christmas lights and the pool lights over the tables. A juke-box tries to fill the silence. Two women dance sloppily on the dance floor in front of a half dozen men. Two barfly's sit hunched over their drinks at the bar.

PETE finishes making a drug deal across the bar with a young girl before taking up his post watching a soccer game on the big screen television.

The girl walks to the door passing Castle who stands by the door. Seeing the SKULL painted on his chest beneath his jacket causes her to shudder and hurry out the door.

Castle walks to the bar. Sensing him Pete turns. A frightened look passes quickly replaced by a smug expression.

PETE

Been expecting you.

(Castle glares at him)

Aren't you supposed to say something cool now?

Pete's smug look turns to a nervous laugh. Behind Castle some of the patrons begin moving away. Others move toward him.

PETE (CONT'D)

Johnny called. Told us to expect you. He put fifty Gs on your head.

CASTLE

Fifty Gs.

PETE

Yeah. I'm gonna split it with some of the regulars.

Two men have moved in close behind Castle.

CASTLE

You won't live to collect.

The fight starts in a blur. One man swings at Castle who ducks/spins producing the bat from under his jacket and smashes the mans knee dropping him. The second man takes a blow from the bat in the throat. He drops gasping for air.

Pete whips a SHOTGUN from beneath the bar. Before he can fire Castle slams the bat across his forearm breaking it. The gun drops.

Another man grabs Castle from behind pitching him across the pool table. Six men advance. Castle stands, his jacket has come off revealing the skull on his chest.

This time as Castle wades in he is more clinical, more precise. Not flailing like a wild animal. In addition to his fists, knees and feet, pool cues are smashed across skulls and then used to stab. Pool balls become missiles or held in a fist and used to smash teeth. Tables, chairs, light fixtures all become fair game. In short order all six lay badly broken on the floor.

A door slams shut as Pete makes his escape to the alley. Castle grabs the shot gun and follows.

EXT. ALLEY -- MOMENTS LATER

Castle kicks open the door to find the narrow alley in darkness. His steps crunch on broken glass. He comes to a dead end.

ENGINE REVS behind him. Spinning Castle is blinded as HEADLIGHTS snap on. Tires squeal as it accelerates towards him.

Castle fires once hitting a headlight. The engines revs again. With nowhere to go Castle does the unexpected, he runs at the car!

Just before impact he jumps, sliding up the hood to the windshield, then over the roof before tumbling off the back.

Surprised by Castle's actions Pete doesn't hit the brakes in time. The car slams into the brick wall at full speed.

EXT. ALLEY -- MOMENTS LATER

The alley has gone quiet except for distant sounds of the city.

Castle slowly drags himself to his feet. He stumbles into the wall as he makes his way to the crumpled car.

O.S crying.

INT. CAR

Pete is pinned to his seat, the steering wheel jammed into his chest.

PETE  
Help! Somebody! Help me, please!

O.S. footfalls on the roof of the car.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Hey! Hey! I'm in here! Get some help!

Pete's POV - Castle steps down onto the remnants of the buckled hood. He is distorted by the splintered windshield.

PETE (CONT'D)  
(whimpering)  
Oh God...

CASTLE  
Where do the drugs come from?

PETE  
Drugs? I need help here!

CASTLE  
Tell me where the drugs come from.

PETE  
And you'll get me help? Okay, a crew, MDK, they got a place on Carlton Street. Johnny stashed stuff there.

CASTLE  
MDK?

PETE  
Murder Death Kill. It's a gang. Johnny's got a deal with them. His old man don't know. Okay? Please get me some help.

Castle walks back over the car.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Wait! You said you'd help!

CASTLE  
(walking away)  
No I didn't.

Pete is in full panic now. He tries to free himself but he is pinned too tightly. He sobs pathetically as the silence returns.

O.S diesel engine revs up.

Lights illuminate the car. Pete looks to the mirror to see a GARBAGE TRUCK pull into the alley.

PETE

Hey! Help me! I'm stuck!

O.S. diesel roars louder.

Pete's POV - in the mirror he sees the garbage truck crush garbage cans as it accelerates towards him. The alley is so narrow that the trucks sides scrape the walls throwing up showers of sparks. It accelerates again.

Pete can do nothing but scream as the garbage truck slams into the car pancaking it to the wall.

Castle kicks out the windshield and climbs out. The alley is quiet again.

INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Castle sits at the work bench cleaning Pete's shotgun. A box of shotgun shells sits next to Sebastiano's .45 and six loaded magazines. There is also a HOLSTER and MAGAZINE HOLDER on the workbench. A FOLDING KNIFE is stuck into the wood.

O.S knock at the door.

Castle calmly gathers up the shot gun and ammunition. Pulls on the CIRCUIT BREAKER BOX which swings open, revealing hiding space. He stashes the weapon inside before loading the .45 and tucking it under his shirt.

Looking out the window Castle sneers.

Opens the door to find Feist and Lacefield standing there.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Mr. Castle. Can we have a moment?

Castle steps aside.

CASTLE

Here with an update of your investigation?

DETECTIVE FEIST

In a manner of speaking. In the last few weeks a number of the men you identified have been killed.



Beat.

CASTLE

Is there a question coming?

DETECTIVE FEIST

All right; did you have anything to do with these deaths?

CASTLE

And if I did, would you arrest me?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Personally, I'd give you a medal. If it was you.

Feist gives him a withering stare.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Can you tell us where you were two nights ago?

CASTLE

Home.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Anyone verify that...?

Castle glares at him.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Forget that. Look I'm not trying to be an asshole but no one wants the city turned into a war zone. People will get hurt. The wrong people. You have to understand that.

CASTLE

I'll keep it in mind.

DETECTIVE FEIST

And there is a good possibility the Canselli organization may come after you. Whether you are involved or not.

CASTLE

The light is always on.

Detective Lacefield looks from the garage to the untouched kitchen.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Still camping?

CASTLE

I sleep better out there.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

I understand.  
 (to Feist)  
 Are we about done?

DETECTIVE FEIST

(sighs)  
 Any recent weapons purchases? Just  
 for my report.

Feists POV spots bag from Cabela's Sporting Goods on the  
 workbench.

CASTLE

Yes.

DETECTIVE FEIST

What?

CASTLE

I bought a paintball gun.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

(grinning)  
 Paintball? Kind of tame isn't it?

CASTLE

You would prefer an RPG?

DETECTIVE FEIST

Nothing else?  
 (Castle shakes his  
 head)  
 Okay, then we'll leave you be.

Castle walks them to the door.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Please think about what I've said.  
 These are not people to cross.

CASTLE

Right.

Steps out the door.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

(closing the door)  
 Happy hunting.

INT. THE CORNER MARKET -- DAY

Castle enters. Nods to Sam who nods back.

Castle grabs some milk and apples before making his way to  
 the counter.

SAMUEL  
How are you Frank?

CASTLE  
Been busy.

Samantha comes out of the back. Seeing Castle she shudders before stepping close to her father hugging his leg.

SAMUEL  
Samantha, did you say hi to Mr. Castle?

She looks at him. Castle tries to smile.

B.G. door opens.

CASTLE  
It's okay.

Castle's POV Samantha's eyes go WIDE.

Whack! Castle is struck by a SAP from behind. He stumbles. Two men jump in swinging saps at him. Castle absorbs the blows before grabbing one man and ramming a knee into his groin. Another sap slams into the back of his head stunning him. Before he can turn a kick catches him in the face.

Staggered Castle turns back to see a short Asian man, THE MONK dressed in a suit. The Monk is a martial arts expert.

THE MONK  
I'm The Monk. The Monk gonna teach you a lesson.

Castle wavers.

THE MONK (CONT'D)  
Canselli pay extra for you. Say you some bad-ass. Not look like much to me. This no take long. Maybe give Canselli discount.

With that he explodes at Castle firing kicks, knees, elbows at the same time the other three men swing their saps.

Bloodied Castle staggers but won't go down. The Monk is getting frustrated.

THE MONK (CONT'D)  
Hold him!

Two men grab Castle by the arms holding him erect. Castle head butts one but before he can do anything the third man gets him in a choke hold.

THE MONK (CONT'D)

Finally.

He takes a running leap aiming a kick at Castle's head. Crack! Finally Castle goes down.

The men step away panting.

THE MONK (CONT'D)

(to the others)

You, get the family. You, get the car. Park it in front.

(they move out)

You, secure his hands. I'm going to get a Gatorade.

O.S. sounds of a scuffle and Samantha SCREAMING.

The Thug brings Samuel and Samantha from the back room. He has Samuel's arm twisted behind his back.

The Monk returns with his drink and a Twinkie.

THE MONK (CONT'D)

(to the man near Castle)

You, go check the street. All the noise she is making is going to bring the entire neighborhood.

The man looks at the unconscious Castle, shrugs and leaves.

THE MONK (CONT'D)

(to Samantha)

Kid, you shut up now or I break all your fingers. Make you eat them.

SAMUEL

Samantha, it's okay. Be quiet. Please.

THE MONK

(strikes him with an elbow)

You too old man.

Seeing her father in pain only makes Samantha cry louder.

SAMANTHA

Daddee! Don't hurt my daddee!  
DADDY! DADDEE!

Her voice is reminiscent of Castle's children when they were gunned down.

CASTLE'S eyes struggle to open. Something goes off in his mind.

Castle starts to move. Somehow he begins to rise. His eyes open slowly. We've see that look from before.

THUG  
(seeing him)  
Whoa! He's getting up!

He rushes around the counter swinging his sap. Castle staggers but deflects the blow. The man tries to swing back but Castle intercepts the arm and breaks it.

Castle falls back into a shelf as The Monk steps around the counter. He shoves Samantha out of the way.

THE MONK  
(grinning)  
Big boy wants another taste? Okay.

With a hop he rushes forward as Castle pulls himself up. As The Monk is about to leap Castle throws a can of BEANS knocking him off balance. The Monk falls.

From the ground The Monk tries an up kick but Castle grabs his ankle.

Castle stomps down hard on The Monk's groin. Then using his knee as a fulcrum he bends The Monk's knee at a disgusting angle. First there's a POP as the knee goes. Then a SNAP as the bone breaks. The Monk screams in agony.

Castle spins, swinging him into the wall roaring like an animal.

He continues to smash The Monk into the walls, the floor, the shelves as if he was having a temper tantrum.

Finally he stops. The leg he holds is facing the opposite direction.

The Monk is a twisted red mess that is barely recognizable as human.

O.S. Samantha sobbing.

Her sobs are the only thing that make him stop. Castle looks down at the remnants of The Monk.

Samuel rushes from the back but Castle puts up a hand.

CASTLE  
No. Call the cops. Then hide in the back.

SAMUEL  
But you're hurt and the others are coming back.

CASTLE

Do what I say. Hurry.

SAMUEL

What about the police? What do I tell them?

CASTLE

The truth.

Samuel nods reluctantly before gathering Samantha. He stops at the backdoor.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for this.

Samuel nods before leaving.

Castle goes behind the counter and grabs a bottle of JACK DANIELS. Opens it and take a long drink.

Comes back around as the thug moans from the ground. Castle puts his boot on the mans throat. He watches the front door as he presses down. Finally the man stops moving.

Castle steps behind the door.

O.S. car pulls up out front.

FRONT DOOR

THUG #1

Hey man, you ready?

Steps inside. Thug #2 is close behind.

Castle steps from behind the door. SMASH. Shatters the bottle over Thug #1s head.

Before Thug #2 can react Castle drives the jagged remnants of the bottle into his throat. Blood flies.

Thug #1 whips out a **PISTOL**.

Castle grabs Thug #2, uses his head as a battering ram slamming him into Thug #1s face.

Castle slaps down on the pistol. It goes off hitting Thug #1 in the foot. Castle drives an elbow into his face mashing his already bloody nose. Spinning he flips him to the floor.

Castle has the pistol in his hand. Jams it into his neck and fires. Kills him instantly.

Castle wavers as he stares at the carnage. Then he rifles the wallets of the men before adding the money from his wallet and stuffing it all in the cash register.

O.S sirens

Castle staggers out the door.

EXT. CARLTON STREET -- NIGHT

The MDK stash house is an older two-story house sitting on a patch of lawn strewn with car tires, broken bicycles, rusting barbecues, a broken basketball net and an engine hanging from a hoist. The NEON GREEN LOW-RIDER is parked out front.

Iron bars cover the windows and the entrance is plate steel with a small slot.

Security cameras are mounted on the eaves covering the approaches.

Only a few houses away is a PLAYGROUND.

INT. STASH HOUSE

A haze of smoke hangs in the air above the dozen occupants. They slouch on broken couches and chairs watching football on a massive television. Two of their number play video games on another massive television. Around them is an impressive array of weapons including PISTOLS, ASSAULT RIFLES, SHOTGUNS and LONG RIFLES.

KITCHEN

EIGHT BALL, twenties, sits at the kitchen table. He is in charge of the stash house. Smoking a joint he watches television on his phone. A KEVLAR vest hangs from his chair. Beside him are the monitors for the security cameras.

B.G one of the monitors goes dark.

EXT. STASH HOUSE

Castle lowers the PAINTBALL GUN.

INSERT

Outside - Security camera with PAINT dripping from the lens.

INT. STASH HOUSE

Eight Ball notices the blank monitor.

EIGHT BALL

Yo, Tiny go check the cameras.

From the living room an enormous man, TINY, half turns.

TINY

Why?

EIGHT BALL

'Cause the one over the door ain't working.

TINY

So?

EIGHT BALL

So I told you to. Now get.

Reluctantly Tiny gets up. He grabs an M-4 rifle before heading to the door. Sliding back the peep-hole he peers outside.

TINY

Ain't nothing out here.

EIGHT BALL

You gotta go out an' look! Damn you a lazy ass.

Muttering to himself Tiny pulls back the heavy latches and opens the door.

EXT. STASH HOUSE

Tiny steps out and looks at the camera with a flashlight. Behind him the shadows move.

Castle jumps on Tiny's back, clamping a hand over his mouth as he plunges a KNIFE into his neck. They collapse to the ground with Castle wrapping his legs around Tiny's body keeping him still as he bleeds out.

When he stops, Castle slips from beneath him. He is dressed in his SKULL SHIRT and jeans. The .45 is holstered on his hip. He slings his shotgun across his back, grabs the M-4 doing a quick check. He shoulders it then steps before the door and raises his boot-.

INT. STASH HOUSE

BOOM. The door flies open slamming into the wall. Eight Ball is coming towards him through the living room.

Castle fires two bullets into his chest. It takes the others a moment to realize what is happening. Then they all scramble for weapons.

Castle is quick on the trigger cutting down four before they get out of their chairs.

Three others burst from their chairs running out the back of the living room.

Castle dodges back to the hallway just as they dive through a door to the basement.



Beside him the door from the second floor stairs creaks open. A GUN pokes through.

Castle rams his shoulder into the door pinning the gun which FIRES. Drawing his own pistol Castle fires through the door. The door above his head splinters as another gunman comes down the stairs.

Diving for the M-4 Castle fires through the wall until he hears a THUD of the falling body.

He unslings the SHOTGUN and advances on the basement door. Three shots shatter the handle and the hinges. With a kick the door falls away.

EIGHTBALL

Who the fuck you think you are coming  
in my house? Eh?

Eightball steps from the living room to the hall. He is bloody, his KEVLAR torn. A wild look in his eye, a PISTOL in his hand.

EIGHTBALL (CONT'D)

You think you can come in here and  
smoke me? This is my house mother-  
fucker! MINE!  
(raps his vest)  
Kevlar bitch!

BOOM. Castle fires. The shotgun blast tears Eightball's head apart. He drops like a rag doll.

Castle turns back to the basement door. Without dropping his aim he reloads the shotgun.

BASEMENT

Cautiously Castle descends the wooden stairs. Like the outside the basement is stacked with detritus - old furniture, a bed, bicycles, boxes of newspapers and magazines.

But in the middle is a massive STEEL BOX about the size of a shed.

Castle raps a fist off the side.

O.S. voices and flushing noises from inside the box.

INT. BOX

Remaining guards are flushing drugs.

GANG-BANGER#3

It ain't the cops.

GANG-BANGER #4

Eight ball says, we get hit, get to the basement and flush the stuff.

GANG-BANGER #3

Cops don't come in guns blazing. This fucker didn't say nothing. No warrant, no nothing.

GANG-BANGER #5

So what? If he ain't 5-0 then we hunker down an' wait. Stop flushing that shit. Ain't no way in here.

GUARD #3

(yells)

You hear that? Ain't no way in here mother-fucker! So you best be on your way!

BASEMENT

Castle inspects the box. Checks out the door. It opens out. Locks from the inside.

Takes bed rails. Jams them between the door and a support pillar. Shoves heavy stuff, chair, mattress against the door. Tosses other boxes of junk around the box.

EXT. BACK-YARD

Castle takes PROPANE TANK off barbecue. Grabs the lighter.

BASEMENT

Opens the tank. Flicks the lighter. Whoosh of flame. Junk begins to burn.

Leaves.

INT. BOX

Smoke is seeping inside.

GUARD #3

Hey! What are you doing out there?

GUARD #4

Hey!

GUARD #3

I don't like this. We gotta get outta here.

GUARD #5

But-.

GUARD #4  
 We open the door and start blasting.  
 Whoever is out there, cop, no cop,  
 we blast 'em!

Others nod. Raise weapons.

Gang-banger #4 grabs the handle.

GUARD #4 (CONT'D)  
 Yeeow!! It's fucking hot!!

GUARD #3  
 What? How can it be hot?

Gang-banger #4 wraps his hand with his shirt tail.

GUARD #4  
 Ready?

Nods again. Twists the handle. Pushes. Nothing happens.  
 Pushes harder. Still nothing.

GUARD #4 (CONT'D)  
 (panicked)  
 What the fuck? It won't move!

MAIN FLOOR

Castle has gone shopping, grabbing weapons and equipment.  
 Carries it all in a duffel bag.

Smoke and flames billow from the basement.

O.S. screams for help.

Castle heads for the back door. Stops beside Eightball.

CASTLE  
 Next time wear your Kevlar hat.

Pulls the vest off him swings it over his shoulder.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Castle stands before the graves of his family.

A POLICE CAR rolls up behind him. Officers approach. Hands  
 on their weapons.

OFFICER #1  
 Frank Castle?

Castle turns, scowling.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Castle?

Castle nods glaring at him.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)  
We'd like you to come with us. Down  
to the station.

CASTLE  
Am I under arrest?

OFFICER #1  
The detectives have some questions.  
They can explain better.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM -- LATER

Castle sits at the table. Distant. Silent. Still. Calm.

Feist enters.

CASTLE  
Thanks for sending your boys to the  
cemetery. That was classy.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
You're lucky I didn't send ESU.

CASTLE  
So I should thank you?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Jesus Christ, what were you thinking?  
I expected you would lay a beating  
on a couple of them in an alley  
somewhere. Maybe even take a shot  
at them. And you know what? I might  
have helped you. Looked the other  
way, dragged my feet on the  
investigation. But this? This is  
insane.

Castle looks at him without expression.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)  
Don't act like you don't know. We  
found a dozen bodies at that stash  
house. Double taps. Precise  
shooting. Whoever hit them, hit  
them hard and fast. Killed everyone  
but didn't touch the dope or money.  
Sound familiar?

CASTLE  
Should it?

DETECTIVE FEIST  
Don't play this game! God-damn.  
(MORE)

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Three of these guys were found locked in some kind of steel bunker. They were cooked alive!

Castle looks at him without expression.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Frank, I had the mayor call me this morning. Not my boss. Me. You know why? He's scared. A lot of people are scared. People are asking what kind of person could do something like that.

CASTLE

The mayor. Huh. These guys must have been important. The mayor never called me when my family was killed. No flowers, no card. Nothing.

Feist sits. He takes his SHIELD off his belt and puts it on the desk face down. He reaches for the microphone and disconnects it from the wire. Sits back.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Have you thought about how far you're willing to go? When's enough enough?

CASTLE

When they're all dead.

DETECTIVE FEIST

All of the Canselli's? What then?

CASTLE

To be determined.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Why you? Why do you have to be the one?

CASTLE

Because someone has to. Because they have to be punished.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Forgive me for saying this Frank but there are others out there who've lost loved ones. They aren't planning a war.

CASTLE

Exactly. I'm not the only one. This happens too often. And nothing is done. It's time someone pushed back.

DETECTIVE FEIST

(sighing)

Frank, you've been through a lot,  
not just losing your family, but the  
case falling apart, the other stuff.  
I get it. Nobody could blame you  
for being pissed off...

CASTLE

But?

DETECTIVE FEIST

But this can't go on. I'll go to  
bat for you with the D.A...

Castle looks at him impassively.

Feist draws a deep breath. Plugs the recorder back in.  
Clips his badge back on his belt.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

You told me before to do my job.  
Well, my job is catching criminals.  
And whoever did this is a criminal,  
*whatever* their motives. And I promise  
you, I will bring them in.

Castle scoffs.

CASTLE

We're through.

Gets up. Leaves.

DETECTIVE FEIST

For now.

INT. SAM'S BISTRO -- NIGHT

Six old men sit around a table. They are the various heads  
of the Canselli crime family. Isadore sits at the head.

They are disheveled owing to the late hour.

No one else is in the restaurant.

LUCA

What the hell was your boy thinking?

STEPHANO

-that shoot-out at the park was bad  
enough. But now this!

BASILIO

-pretty bad when you can't keep you  
own kid under control.

STEPHANO

-people are losing faith in the family. The heat is all over us.

Isadore looks at him, saying nothing.

LUCA

I thought we were clear; that his actions were too public.

ISADORE

(calmly)

He was told to lay low.

LUCA

Well, he sure didn't follow those instructions, now did he? You either for that matter. What were you thinking, sending The Monk after this Punisher guy?

ISADORE

That was not my decision.

LUCA

Who's was it?

ISADORE

It doesn't matter right now.

DOMINIC

It was Rosalita wasn't it? Jesus Christ nice way to run an outfit.

ISADORE

(snapping forward)

You got something to say, you little fuck, then say it!

Beat.

STEPHANO

We all have a considerable investment in this operation. Lots of time and work has gone into it. I think I speak for everyone when I say that we would hate to put that in jeopardy because Johnny was a loose cannon. We just want assurances that this isn't going to happen again.

Nods all around.

ISADORE

(disgusted)

Assurances?

(MORE)

ISADORE (CONT'D)

What the fuck do you think this is?  
We run a business that deals in guns,  
hookers and dope. You think State  
Farm has a policy to cover that?  
Grow the fuck up.

Mouths open to respond.

ISADORE (CONT'D)

Shut up. I ain't done yet. Okay,  
Johnny fucked up large. As for the  
other thing, well, let's just say  
The Monk is lucky he's dead.

BASILIO

But-.

ISADORE

But nothing! You sound like a buncha  
bitches whining about your shit and  
your 'investments.' Shut the fuck  
up! I got more at stake here than  
alla you pussies. This is *my* family.  
My name. My family brought you in,  
brought you together when you were  
more interested in trying to whack  
each other over a street corner  
dealer. I made you millions. So  
let me be crystal clear, **NONE** of you  
has more to lose than me. None.

STEPHANO

So what do we do?

ISADORE

'We' will do nothing. I will take  
care of it.

LUCA

What about this Punisher?

STEPHANO

And how much is it gonna cost us?

Isadore fixes him with an icy stare.

ISADORE

You? Nothing.

EXT. CASTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house has been reduced to a charred shell. A few FIRE  
INVESTIGATORS probe through the remains. Shadows are  
everywhere from the flashlights and the strobing emergency  
lights.



Feist stands in the burned out kitchen.

Castle appears in the darkness.

Feist gasps but regains his composure.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Witnesses say a car pulled up. A couple guys started tossing Molatov Cocktails.

CASTLE

You know damn well who did it.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Yeah I do. Just like I know who's been out wasting wise-guys. God-damn Castle, how long will you use for families' death as an excuse for this crusade?

WHACK!

Castle hits him hard, knocking him into a wall. Roaring Castle grabs him by the throat lifting him off the ground.

Castle tosses Feist to the ground.

Feist struggles to his feet.

Whack. Castle hits him again.

Feist draws his pistol.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Stop!

Ignoring the gun Castle hits him again.

CASTLE

What are you waiting for?

DETECTIVE FEIST

Don't make me-.

CASTLE

Just shoot!

Slaps the gun aside and hits him again.

Feist stumbles back. Brings the gun up. Steadies his aim.

Castle steps right up to him. He glares straight into Feist's eyes.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

(snarling)

You won't shoot. And those scumbags know it! And that's why you'll fail.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Fail?

CASTLE

Yes fail. You've got every reason to shoot me but you won't. You can't. I can see it in your eyes. All you can think about is the shit you'll be in with your boss, the D.A., the press.

DETECTIVE FEIST

You're wrong.

CASTLE

Then pull the trigger.

Feist hesitates then lowers the pistol.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

They have nothing to fear from you. Those handcuffs aren't for them. They're for you.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Those laws protect-.

CASTLE

They're useless! They don't protect the innocents. They protect the guilty. The scum use those laws as a shield.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Without them it would be chaos.

CASTLE

Wake up detective! It already is. Do you realize those responsible for killing my family have spent less than a week in jail? For three murders!

DETECTIVE FEIST

Still-.

CASTLE

You know where they live, what car they drive, where they buy their clothes, who they talk to, Christ you even know what they had for lunch.

(MORE)

CASTLE (CONT'D)

You know every God-damn thing they do, legal and illegal. And yet they're still walking around free.

Feist's head drops. He holsters the pistol. Rubs his jaw.

DETECTIVE FEIST

I'm sorry for what I said. I deserved that.

Castle turns away. Sifts through the remains of his home.

DETECTIVE FEIST (CONT'D)

Gotta say you are making an impact. Families are getting pissed. There's been talk that they want Johnny on ice until their current problem, that would be you, is out of the way.

CASTLE

I'm not going anywhere.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Huh. Wouldn't be interested in taking a trip? A cruise maybe?

CASTLE

Did I hit you that hard or are you soft in the head? What are you talking about?

DETECTIVE FEIST

Word I got is his old man rented a whole luxury yacht just to sail him to Florida.

CASTLE

An entire ship?

DETECTIVE FEIST

Johnny's afraid of flying. And driving isn't stylish enough.

CASTLE

Why're you telling me this?

DETECTIVE FEIST

Maybe I am tired of seeing these guys get away. Maybe I needed a punch in the face to wake me up to it.

CASTLE

And what about me?

## DETECTIVE FEIST

Just wait until the ship is outside the twelve mile limit. After that it's out of my jurisdiction.

## INT. ATLANTIC MAIDEN SUPER YACHT - EVENING

The ship is large, a super yacht capable of carrying forty passengers in luxury while being attended to by a crew of thirty.

It comes with all the amenities, ornate dining lounge, richly appointed suites, fitness center, pool, nightclub and mini-casino, helipad.

And yet the ship is nearly vacant.

## INT. DINING ROOM

Johnny and a dozen of his people sit around a long table eating and drinking.

Isadore sits at the head of the table sipping water.

## JOHNNY

The food is great, Pop.

## ISADORE

Don't thank me. Thank Angelo. He said he'd take care of the cooking.

## ADRIANO

That fruit always liked playing inna kitchen.

Laughter.

## ISADORE

Be glad he's in there. Otherwise you'd starve.

## JOHNNY

There ain't nobody else inna kitchen?

## ISADORE

There's no one else on the boat except for the captain, a couple of guys to drive and couple more in the engine room.

## JOHNNY

Who's gonna run the casino?

## ISADORE

Find a deck of cards. This ain't a vacation.

JOHNNY

I'm in exile. I get it. But Pop, c'mon, can't we at least get some broads out here? The boys are going to be humping the furniture by the time we get to Florida.

Loud laughter.

ISADORE

(checks his watch)

We're gathering some ladies as we speak. They're coming out on the next chopper. We didn't want to get them beforehand incase someone decided to talk.

JOHNNY

Smart.

ISADORE

And expensive.

JOHNNY

All right Pop, I get it.

Isadore gets up from the table.

ISADORE

I hope so.

(checks watch again)

I gotta go.

(plants a kiss on  
Johnny's forehead)

Take care son.

Isadore turns and leaves. Followed by his body guard JAMES.

JOHNNY

Old fuck worries too much.

Others laugh nervously.

EXT. HELIPAD -- MOMENTS LATER

HELICOPTER sits with its rotor spinning.

PILOT jogs over to Isadore.

PILOT

Just got a call from the dock.  
Security found one of the guards  
unconscious.

Isadore looks around warily. Nods. Steps to the helicopter.

JAMES  
It's gotta be him. Do you want me  
to tell your boy?

Beat.

ISADORE  
No. Call the others. Tell them to  
haul ass.

PILOT  
And us?

ISADORE  
Lets go.

INT. LOUNGE -- LATER

Johnny and the others lounge about in comfortable chairs.  
Some are drinking, a few playing cards, some watching boxing  
on tv.

Two have even set up a basketball net using a garbage can  
and a fake tree and are playing twenty-one.

Angelo enters.

ANGELO  
Hey Johnny, you seen the driver?

JOHNNY  
What the fuck are you talking about?

ANGELO  
The guy driving the boat. I went up  
to see how much longer and there's  
no one there.

INSERT ships crew speeding away in a lifeboat.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
It looks like we're on auto-pilot or  
something.

JOHNNY  
So why the fuck do you think I would  
know where the driver is?

VINNIE  
Maybe he's taking a leak.

JOHNNY  
Pop said there's more in the engine  
room. Go ask one of them.

Angelo nods. Turns around and - is ripped apart in a hail  
of bullets.

Everyone freezes.

Angelo's body hits the floor.

Castle stands in his place.

He is ready for war, wearing the SKULL SHIRT over the kevlar vest, Colt in a drop-leg holster, pistol in shoulder rig, the shotgun across his back, M-4 tucked tight to his shoulder. And ammunition. Lots of it.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Jesus.

Castle advances swiftly into the room dropping the basketball players with two bullets each to the chest.

One of the drinkers gets off a shot that hits the wall next to Castle showering him in debris. Castle barely ducks.

DRINKER

(shooting)

C'mon tough guy! Quit hiding like a bitch! C'mon-.

Castle slides out. Three shots. Down goes the drinker.

Others panic and run.

Two others take cover behind the bar, firing over the top.

Castle flicks the selector to FULL-AUTO and sprays the bottles lining the wall behind the bar.

The gunmen are soaked in booze.

Flick. Castle tosses a lit ZIPPO LIGHTER at them. Whoosh. The alcohol ignites. They flail about trying to douse their clothes.

Smoke fills the room. Castle searches for Johnny but Vinnie has already rushed him out the door.

O.S. thump, thump thump of helicopter coming in for a landing.

EXT. BOAT DECK

Helicopter touches down.

Adriano races to it. Arrives as the side door opens.

ADRIANO

Hurry! Take off quick!

A HAND comes out knocking him back.

PARKER  
Back up little man.

PARKER, team leader, steps out followed by a DOZEN MORE MEN.  
All are well armed with assault weapons. Calm and cool.  
These guys are no strangers to violence.

ADRIANO  
What the fuck-?

PARKER  
(to the others)  
You've seen the picture. You know  
the target.

BLAKEY  
(joking)  
Don't seem right, all of us after  
just one guy.

MULLIGAN  
That why you brought your grenades?  
Cause you feel sorry for the guy?

YOUNG  
Why the fuck you bring them anyway?  
We're on a boat for Christ-sakes.  
You gonna sink us all you let one of  
them off.

PARKER  
Stow it. Fifty thousand for his  
head make you feel better?  
(nods all around)  
Any other stupid questions?  
(none)  
Then move out.

They break off into smaller groups and move out.

Parker steps up to Adriano.

The helicopter lifts off.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
Okay shit-bird, where's the last  
place you saw this guy?

ADRIANO  
The guy with the guns?

PARKER  
No, Santa Claus.

ADRIANO  
In-in-in the lounge. Where is the  
helicopter going?



PARKER

Don't want anyone leaving the party  
too soon.

Walks away.

ADRIANO

Who are you guys?

PARKER

We're the cavalry.

EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE SHIP

Johnny, Vinnie, Charlie and Gianni burst out on the deck.  
They can hear the helicopter.

JOHNNY

The helicopter!

Rushes for the Boat Deck.

Castle appears behind them. Opens fire. Takes down Gianni  
and Charlie.

Vinnie grabs Johnny, pitching him through an open door before  
diving through himself.

Castle fires after them. Tracks them back inside. Sees  
them at the end of the companionway.

Inside it is a rain-storm as the sprinklers have gone off.

Castle rushes down the companionway after them. Suddenly  
two Assaulters appear cutting him off with a hail storm of  
bullets.

Castle dives for a stairway tumbling down and ending up in a  
DINING AREA.

Assaulters follow him.

DINING AREA

Castle is on the move racing across the dining room for  
another set of stairs. He takes them two at a time.

The assaulter charge after him from below.

As he runs Castle fires down through the stairs at them.

INSERT top of the stairs. The water from the sprinklers  
falls at a strange angle just around the corner. An Assaulter  
waits at the top, the water deflecting off him.

At the top Castle's M-4 runs dry. P.O.V. spots the water  
falling away from the wall.

Lightning quick he drops the M-4 in its sling.

Assaulter steps out.

Castle quick draws the .45. Fires fast fast fast hitting him in the legs and then the head when he falls. Holsters the .45. Re-loads the M-4. Keeps moving.

Gunman falls.

INT. HALLWAY

Castle moves quickly through the ship searching the rooms. He kicks in a door, does a quick check. Moves on.

Unseen a MUZZLE pokes around a corner. Fires, spraying blindly.

Castle is hit. Once in the vest and once through the arm. Blood sprays over the wall. Castle goes down.

SHAW steps out keeping Castle covered.

SHAW

Whooooee! I got him! Yessir I got him! Fifty Gs for this mother-fucker!

He straddles Castle, gun aimed at his head.

Two other assaulters stay back. Smug. Confident, they lower their guns.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Don't worry big fella. Just a seven point six two to make it official.

Castle grabs the muzzle shoving the gun away.

Shaw panics and fires, his bullets tearing up the floor.

The others hesitate. Shaw is in the line of fire.

Castle draws the .45 shoots both from his back. Then shoots Shaw up the ass, the bullets ripping apart his innards.

O.S. more assaulters are coming.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Three assaulters advance down the hallway. They survey the damage. FOUR BODIES on the floor. Blood on the wall. Assuming Castle carried on down they step over the bodies.

Boom. Boom. Boom. All three go down with shots to the back of the head.

Castle pulls himself from beneath the bodies where he was playing dead.

INT. COMPANIONWAY

Johnny, Vinnie are scrambling. They run into Adriano.

ADRIANO  
Johnny, what the hell is going on?

JOHNNY  
It's that Castle guy. The Punisher.

ADRIANO  
But what about the other ones?

JOHNNY  
Who?

ADRIANO  
Dozen guys, all armed up. They got off the chopper then let it fly away.

Johnny thinks for a moment.

JOHNNY  
(whining)  
That son-of-a-bitch.

VINNIE  
Castle?

JOHNNY  
(whining)  
My old man. That old fuck! C'mon, we gotta find someplace to hole up.

INT. WHIRLPOOL ROOM

Castle enters just as two Assaulters, BLAKEY and ROACH come running for the door. Whump.

Castle and the first man, Blakey, collide, their guns crossed like staffs.

ROACH  
Get outta the way!

Castle shoves their guns up spraying the ceiling. Twisting, he forces the still firing gun at Roach killing him.

Blakey head-butts Castle.

Castle cross-checks him in the face with the empty gun.

Both drop their machine guns. They grapple, knees, elbows and fists.

Castle goes for the .45.

Blakey grabs his WOUNDED ARM.

Castle howls. Fires. Pain forces him to drop the gun.

Blakey digs his fingers into the wound.

Castle throws punches. Claws at his head, pulling his hair.

Blakey squeezes harder.

Castle releases his hair. CLAMPS HIS JAWS ON BLAKEY'S EYEBROW.

He howls as Castle rips out a huge chunk of skin.

They stagger apart.

Blakey stumbles. His hand falls on a machine gun. Swings it up.

Castle charges, driving him off his feet ramming him against the wall.

Blakey continues to fire, trying to bring the barrel down to do some damage.

Castle slams him again and again into the wall cracking it.

With a quick twist of his body Castle smashes Blakey's head into the side of the whirlpool. He stuffs his head under the water.

Blakey struggles. This is taking too long.

Castle pulls pistol from shoulder holster and fires.

Blakey slips into the now red water.

As he does Castle grabs two GRENADES off of Blakey's belt.

Castle sits heavily. Reaches over his shoulder. Hand comes away BLOODY.

Reloads and moves on.

INT. CASINO

Castle enters bleeding, wet. The M-4 still tucked tight to his shoulder. Still searching.

There are a few card tables, a roulette wheel and craps tables. There are also two long rows of slot machines.

The sprinklers are running low. The lights twinkle in the pseudo-rain.

Castle sweeps back and forth.

Boom. Door is kicked in, gunmen enter from two directions firing hard and cutting Castle off from escaping.

Castle fires fast, moving for cover behind the slot machines.

PARKER

Fan out. Cut him off!

The remaining assaulters move fast splitting up. They continue firing leap-frogging as they move.

Castle is pinned down in a corner with assaulters closing in from two sides. No way out.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Watch for cross-fires. He's got nowhere to go. Anyone have eyes on him yet?

No answer.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Okay, you guys hang back. We'll flush him to you.

He pulls a FLASH BANG grenade from his vest.

INSERT Castle in the shadows waiting, a **STOLEN RADIO EAR-BUD** in his ear. He's waiting for them.

Parker tosses the flash bang. Castle kicks it around the other side.

BANG! Bright light. Loud noise.

Castle steps out, the M-4 firing on full-auto point blank into the stunned men. There is chaos as the assaulters go down.

Parker's group rushes in from behind.

Castle steps out gun in each hand. He fires head high avoiding the body armor. Blood and brains spray.

He keeps firing until they run dry. When they do he drops them, grabbing discarded weapons and keeps shooting.

Two assaulters, KENTON and TAYLOR, take cover behind the roulette table.

KENTON

Who is this guy? He's a machine.  
He doesn't stop!

TAYLOR

He's just a man. He bleeds like all  
the rest. You loaded?

(nod)

You flank him. I'll cover.

Kenton moves to the end of the table. Pokes his head out.

Boom. Boom. Boom. Shotgun rounds blast the wall next to  
his head.

KENTON

(ducking back)

YOU flank him!

TAYLOR

(into radio)

We're in the casino. He's got us  
pinned down! Everybody haul ass to  
the casino. Repeat; get to the  
casino!

No response.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

He couldn't have gotten everyone-.

Sudden silence from Castle.

KENTON & #7

Empty!

KENTON

Go!

They spring up. Guns coming up.

Castle is already running at them. He dives, landing in a  
spray of water sliding on the wet carpet. Still sliding he  
flips onto his back.

Kenton and Taylor try to adjust their aim.

Too late Castle slides under the table and appears beneath  
them, a pistol in each hand.

He unloads into them.

INT. MASTER SUITE

Adriano and Vinnie listen at the door while Johnny hides  
behind a makeshift barricade of dressers and tables.

He is frantically dialing his cell phone.

JOHNNY

(hissing)

Fuck! How do you call nine-one-one  
from a boat?

ADRIANO

Call the Coast Guard!

JOHNNY

Do you know their number? Idiot.

VINNIE

Your old man?

O.S. footfall in water.

JOHNNY

(ducking)

What was that?

HALLWAY

Castle moves cautiously down the companionway.

MASTER SUITE

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I heard something! What is it?

Adriano and Vinnie are trying to listen. Vinnie puts his  
finger to his lips to silence Johnny.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Oh Christ, he's out there! Oh shit!  
Shoot him! Shoot through the door!  
Shoot him before he comes in here!

Adriano and Vinnie take a moment then step back from the  
door, raising their guns.

They open fire tearing holes in the door.

O.S. thud/splash.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

He's down! You got him! I heard  
the bastard hit the floor!

Adriano and Vinnie reload.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? Go check.

Reluctantly Adriano opens the door while Vinnie provides  
cover.

HALLWAY

Adriano steps out cautiously.

POV He spots a smear of BLOOD on the wall. Smiles.

Then he spots a FIRE EXTINGUISHER on the floor. Castle dropped it making the sound they heard.

ADRIANO

Oh-.

Bang. Castle shoots him from behind.

Castle moves swiftly into the room.

Vinnie jumps out chopping down on Castle's wrists knocking the .45 away.

Castle grabs him and pitches him into the wall.

Vinnie fires but Castle has his arm pinned against the wall.

Johnny fires blindly over the top of his barricade.

Castle batters Vinnie with punches before breaking his arm against the door frame.

Bullets are flying everywhere.

Castle swings Vinnie around using him as a shield.

Johnny fills him with bullets. One gets by and tears through Castle's side.

He dumps Vinnie's body, dives to the ground, snatching up his .45.

Lunging forward he slams into the barricade pinning Johnny against the wall.

Johnny keeps shooting until his gun runs dry.

Castle slams down on the pistol.

Johnny stands up screaming clutching his hand.

Castle hits him once, twice knocking him into the wall.

Roaring like an animal Castle grabs him by the throat and tosses him across the room.

Johnny staggers to his feet.

Castle stands in the middle of the room, pistol rock steady in both hands.



JOHNNY  
 (throws up his hands)  
 Wait! Hold on. Don't shoot.

Castle doesn't move.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
 You don't have to do this. Please.  
 I got cash. You can have it. My-my  
 old man's got even more. It's yours.  
 Whatever you want. House, cars,  
 broads. Is that what you want?

Castle glares at him.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
 Okay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry about  
 what happened to your family, okay?

Johnny looks up. Sees the pistol still in his hand. Drops  
 it like it is on fire.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
 Look, I'm unarmed! I give up.

CASTLE  
 So?

BANG!

Johnny screams. Clutches his belly. Gut-shot. Blood flows  
 through his hands. Looks up at Castle in agony and surprise.

BANG!

Johnny grabs his shattered throat trying to talk/scream but  
 he can only gurgle. His eyes are wide with fear as he drowns  
 on his own blood.

Just before he blacks out - BANG! Castle shoots him in the  
 face.

Bullet makes a small hole going in his cheek but blows out  
 the back of his head.

Castle holds his aim for a moment before holsters the .45.

EXT. HELIPAD

The helicopter swoops in for a landing.

While the engine slows Isadore and James head inside.

James keys a radio. Frowns.

ISADORE  
 What's wrong?

JAMES  
I'm getting nothing.

ISADORE  
That's not a good sign.

HELICOPTER

Pilot get out, comes around.

PILOT  
Whoa!

Castle stands beside the helicopter, his hand resting on the rear seat.

Pilot reaches for a pistol but thinks better of it. Sees that Castle has dropped the FUEL HOSE on the deck spilling aviation fuel on the deck. With a CRACK he ignites a FLARE.

Isadore and James walk back. James has a MP-5 trained on Castle.

PILOT (CONT'D)  
D-don't shoot. Whatever you do,  
don't shoot.

James waves him off.

ISADORE  
You're the Marine, the one they're  
calling The Punisher? Cute.

CASTLE  
You sent the goons.

ISADORE  
(nods)  
Some very capable shooters. The  
best take-down crew in the North-  
east. Or so I thought. Cost me a  
fair penny.  
(Castle glares)  
My kid, he dead?

CASTLE  
(nods)  
You set him up.

ISADORE  
I gave him a fighting chance.  
Apparently that wasn't enough.

CASTLE  
You gave up your own son, knowing  
what was going to happen.

ISADORE

Like I said; he had a chance. Kid was ambitious. But he was stupid. Did stupid things. Like what happened to your family. Too high profile. Bad for business.

CASTLE

Business.

ISADORE

Yeah. So, this is over. You got me? It ends here. Or we finish it here.

James tightens his grip on the MP-5.

Castle holds the flare above the growing lake of fuel.

ISADORE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Look, what happened with your family wasn't personal. Okay? You've settled your score. Now move on.

CASTLE

Move on?

ISADORE

Yeah, move on. Go get drunk or laid or blow your brains out for all I care. But whatever happens, I don't want to ever see around again. Understand?

CASTLE

Really?

ISADORE

Don't overestimate yourself. You're one guy. A very capable guy but you're still just one guy. You go up against all of us and we will bury you. In pieces. You got lucky here tonight. Luck runs out.

Castle takes a moment then backs away slowly.

ISADORE (CONT'D)

Good boy.

They climb into the helicopter. James keeps him covered.

Engine winds up.

CASTLE  
 (yelling)  
 You're going to do something for me!

ISADORE  
 (scoffing)  
 Really?

CASTLE  
 Yeah. I want you to deliver a  
 message.

ISADORE  
 What do I look like; the fucking  
 post office?  
 (to the pilot)  
 Get us out of here.

Isadore sits back.

Helicopter lifts off quickly.

INT. HELICOPTER -- LATER

JAMES  
 That was weird.

ISADORE  
 Him not trying to kill us? He  
 recognizes a no-win situation.

JAMES  
 Maybe. But I don't trust him.

ISADORE  
 (shrugging)  
 Give it a couple weeks. Let things  
 die down. Find him drunk in a bar  
 somewhere. Then take care of him.

JAMES  
 Met a guy who does suicides.

ISADORE  
 He any good?

JAMES  
 Been at it forty years. Never been  
 pinched. He learned from the guy  
 who did Marilyn.

ISADORE  
 Seriously? Give him a call. Get  
 some prices.

James nods.

PILOT  
 (over the intercom)  
 Two minutes out.

Isadore nods.

EXT. HELIPORT

Helicopter flares before the pilot sets it down gently.

HELICOPTER

ISADORE  
 I'm getting too old to be staying up  
 all night.  
 (James smiles)  
 Now all I gotta do is figure out how  
 to tell the wife her kid is dead.

James unbuckles.

Isadore unbuckles. Slides forward in his seat.

Thunk.

Frowning Isadore looks under his seat.

Sees a GRENADE. Thunk. Another one. Gifts from Castle.

BOOM! The helicopter disintegrates in a fireball. Message sent.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Feist is slouched in his car. His chin is covered in stubble. He rubs a hand over a weary face. Yawning.

Looks out the windshield. Does a double take.

Man approaches the grave of the Castle family.

GRAVESITE

Feist walks up behind the man.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 I've been camped out here for two  
 weeks and you're the one that shows  
 up.

Man turns.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
 You need a new hobby.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
 So where have you been?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Things seemed to be in capable hands so I took a bit of lieu time. Gotta get used being retired. Ease into it. You should try it. Beats hanging out in a cemetery.

DETECTIVE FEIST

There are questions that need answering.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Bad guys are dead. Seems pretty straight forward to me.

DETECTIVE FEIST

Old man Canselli has me concerned.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Last I heard he was vapor.

DETECTIVE FEIST

He is. And there are others anxious to fill that empty seat. Word is the sharks are already circling. It could get ugly.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Guess they didn't get the message. Too bad for them.

DETECTIVE FEIST

And what message was that?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Find a new line of work.

DETECTIVE FEIST

So you figure Castle's going to continue this little crusade of his?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Sounds like you're worried about the crooks and scum bags?

DETECTIVE FEIST

I'm worried about innocent people caught in his cross-hairs.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

That won't happen.

DETECTIVE FEIST

How can you be sure?

Lacefield steps aside to reveal the TOMBSTONE with Castle's family's names on it.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Because he knows what it feels like.

Beat.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
The people who killed his family are dead. Why keep going? Does he figure wasting bad guys is going to make things right?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Right and wrong went out the door the moment his family died. His world will never be right again.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
So what's he doing?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Making them pay. Making sure that they will never hurt anyone again. Ever.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
And you're okay with this?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
My cousin Linus lost his son in a drive-by. Got shot because his car was the same make as some dealer. Shooter got six years. Served three. He's out on the street right now. All for killing an innocent twenty year old kid.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Happened before we got partnered.

DETECTIVE FEIST  
And your cousin?

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD  
Marriage imploded. She split. He threw himself into his work as a distraction. Computers and stuff. Basically he has to live with what happened. I can see it eating at him sometimes. Whenever he sees stuff like what happened to Castle he gets really quiet, like his mind is elsewhere.

DETECTIVE FEIST

I'm sorry.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

I would say 'it is what it is.' But that was yesterday. It's a whole new ball game now.

DETECTIVE FEIST

So you don't think I can stop him?

Lacefield nods at the graves.

DETECTIVE LACEFIELD

Not unless you can bring them back.

Feist shakes his head solemnly.

INT. SAM'S BISTRO -- NIGHT

FIVE Old men sit around a table. They are the remaining heads off the Canselli crime family.

They are disheveled and stressed owing to the late hour.

No one else is in the restaurant.

ELIO

Look, I'm just saying that my crew is tight. We can take over the bigger rackets right away. We got the resources and the manpower.

BASILIO

That's 'cause your boys were hiding inna basement wettin' themselves while the rest of us was out there getting our asses shot off. We deserve the unions and-.

DOMINIC

Like you was out there-.

ELIO

I lost people.

BASILIO

Not like the rest of us.

DOMINIC

Just 'cause your boys don't know enough to duck, don't mean you get a bigger cut of the action. My family been running things hand in hand with Isadore for years-.



BASILIO  
Your family's been Isadores fetch  
boy for years.

DOMINIC  
We got history-.

ELIO  
Your family ain't management. You're  
muscle. If that.

Voices rise as they descend into a new round of arguing.

ELIO (CONT'D)  
Enough! Enough! I think it's time  
to hear what Stephano has to say.

Stephano has been sitting quietly watching the arguing.

STEPHANO  
What would you have me say?

ELIO  
We need a decision about taking over  
Isadore's interests.

STEPHANO  
Why ask me? You're the one that  
called this meeting.

ELIO  
Me? I got a call from your people-.

BASILIO  
(to Elio)  
I thought it was you who called us  
here? That was the message I got.

ELIO  
No I-.

DOMINIC  
The message I got was from you  
Basilio.

BASILIO  
Like I would call you.

STEPHANO  
Wait! If none of you called this  
meeting. And I didn't. Then who  
did?

CLICK. Dead bolt lock being thrown.

Everyone turns.

A MAN stands in the shadows next to the EXIT DOOR.

ELIO

Who the hell is that?

Man steps out of the shadows.

CASTLE

I called the meeting.

Everyone starts to move. Panic is rising.

DOMINIC

Oh Jesus, it's HIM!

Castle opens his coat to reveal the grimacing skull. In his hand is an M-4. He brings the weapon to his shoulder-.

Fade out.